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DRUMMER

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APRIL '94

## Tommy Lee

Spyro Gyra's  
Joel Rosenblatt

## The Drummers Of Count Basie

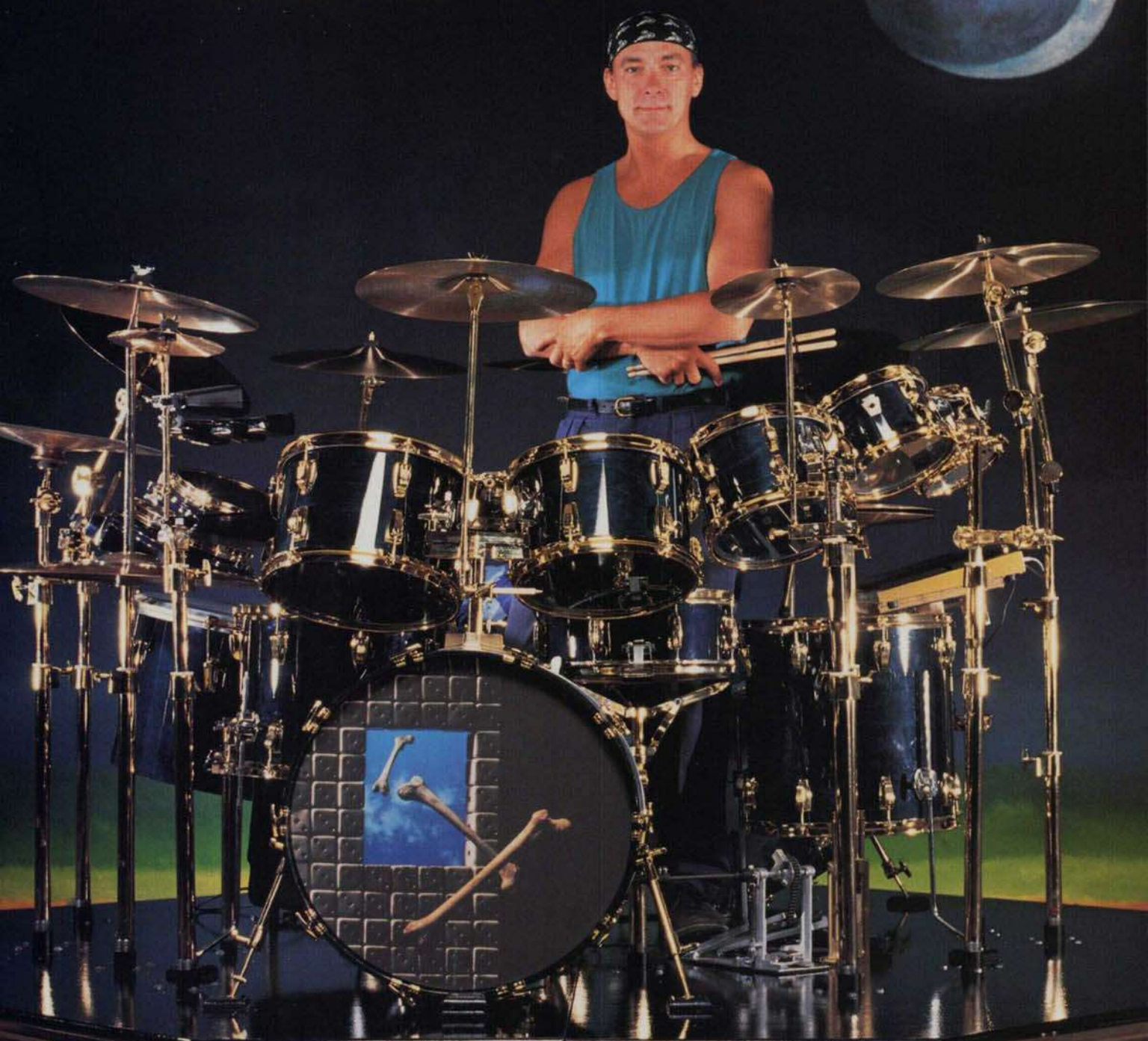
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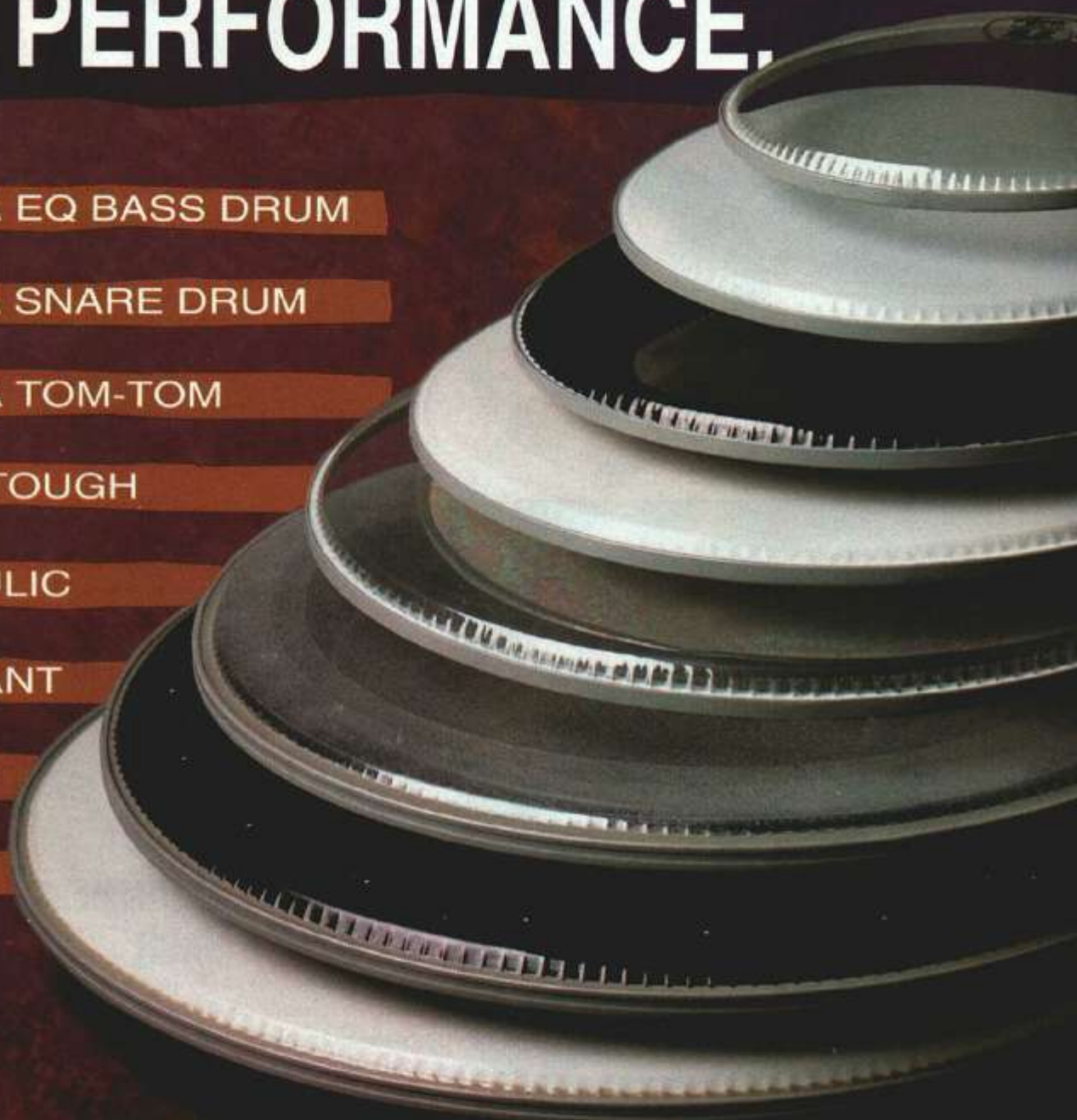
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## On Reader Mail



Every month we get hundreds of letters from *MD* readers all over the world. What kind of letters do we receive? Well, I'm happy to say that rarely does a day go by when we don't get several very complimentary letters that are always a pleasure to read.

We also receive our fair share of critical mail, though. This ranges from readers who are annoyed with us for not having interviewed certain players, to complaints that we're emphasizing one particular style of drumming over another in each issue. After eighteen years, we've pretty much accepted the fact that it's virtually impossible to please *every-one* with every issue. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't write if you have a legitimate gripe, or if you have suggestions for changes and improvements. It's important for us to have your continued input.

We also hear from readers who offer ideas for articles or tips on unknown players they feel we should check out. Letters with valuable ideas are brought into monthly editorial meetings and given further consideration.

Many readers request a personal response to a specific question. Unfortunately, it's impossible to personally answer all the questions we receive, but we do try to answer as many as we can through *MD's It's Questionable* department.

Other readers ask us to send their letters to a favorite name artist in the hopes of receiving a personal reply. Though we *do* forward these letters, we can't guarantee that a reader will receive a response. Obviously, it depends on the artist. Our *Ask A Pro* department is one means by which these requests are fulfilled.

We're also contacted by drummers who've submitted articles that have yet to be published in the magazine. The primary reason for any delay is the abundance of articles we usually have on file. Obviously, we can only fit so many articles into an issue, so there's always a lag time for new material coming in. Keep in mind that if you've received a letter of acceptance for an article you've submitted, your article is in our editorial inventory awaiting publication at some point. There's really no need to repeatedly write or call the office regarding its whereabouts.

Finally, we occasionally hear from readers who are experiencing a problem with a classified advertiser. If you have a valid complaint that requires our attention, *never* hesitate to call or write. We're often able to rectify these problems very promptly. We view it as part of our responsibility to *MD* readers.

Letters? Yes, we certainly receive our share every month. And though the contents of each may differ considerably, we do enjoy hearing from you, and we encourage you to continue writing for whatever reason.

*RG*

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## ADAM NUSSBAUM

I can't imagine a more articulate and enthusiastic spokesman for the concepts involved in jazz drumming than Adam Nussbaum. The attitudes he expressed in your January '94 cover story reveal a consummate musician first, and a drummer second. And he's a heck of a drummer, so imagine what a musician he must be!

It's also nice to see *MD* giving much-deserved coverage to a drummer outside the main profit channels in today's music scene. Don't get me wrong; top rock and pop drummers deserve coverage, too. I'm just applauding *MD*'s efforts to expose its readers to artists from *all* musical fields.

Tom Allen  
Bethlehem PA



## WE AIM TO PLEASE

A few days ago I was in a quandary trying to get a letter to a famous drummer. I tried getting in touch with him through his record label, but they didn't want to help me because I was "no one important." In my desperation, I called a TV show on which this drummer had just made an appearance—but they couldn't help me either.

I had once met Rick Van Horn at an *MD* Festival Weekend, and was impressed with his unassuming demeanor. So I called the *MD* offices to see if I could reach Mr. Van Horn. To my surprise, he took my call and was very supportive in my quest to reach the aforementioned drummer. He suggested that I send my letter to the drummer in care of *MD*, and he guaranteed to forward the letter. In addition, he took a few minutes just to "talk drums" with me.

I would like to thank Mr. Van Horn and all those at *Modern Drummer*, because they treat us "non-famous" drummers with respect and dignity. This is nothing to be taken for granted, and I hope more readers appreciate this magazine for the way it regards its readers not only as drumming fans, but as individual *people*.

Alex Nowak  
Forest Hills NY

## DRUMMING & BANDLEADING

As a lifelong sideman, I've often dreamed of calling the shots myself for a change. So I was very interested in the comments of all the notables featured in your January '94 piece on the subject of drumming and bandleading. I must say that the information was both enlightening and a bit frightening. I never realized just what I might have to put up with as a leader. I'm sure the artistic satisfaction of controlling the direction of the group would be very rewarding, but I'm not sure it would be worth some of the administrative headaches mentioned. But at least now I know what I might be up against when I daydream about running the show. Thanks for the illumination.

Bob Argent  
Los Angeles CA



## BIG BANDS & BASS DRUMS

Charlie Perry's article (*Driver's Seat*: "Big Bands & Bass Drums") in the December '93 issue motivated me to study the performances he noted on the Buddy Rich Memorial Scholarship Concerts video. And I'm not even a drummer! This is the kind of article that makes *Modern Drummer* worth reading. Very well done, Mr. Perry!

Joanne Walz  
Hampton Bays NY



## DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

I'm writing in the hopes that my letter will prevent someone from making the same disastrous mistake as I did. I own a maple-shell snare that I love the sound of—but that requires frequent tuning. In an effort to prevent changes in humidity causing the drum to go out of tune so quickly, I coated the bearing edges with a light coat of polyurethane lacquer. I didn't think this treatment could possibly affect the basic tone of the drum. However, this experiment totally ruined my drum. The tone

qualities were no longer distinguishable at each lug, and the overall tone quality of the drum was lousy. It was only after considerable time and effort spent with some #320 sandpaper that I was able to return the drum to its proper condition. I learned the hard way that "doctoring" drums at home is a risky undertaking.

Timothy Thompson  
Royal Oak MI



## SOUTH AFRICAN CONNECTION

I'm a seventeen-year-old drummer from South Africa. I've been subscribing to *MD* for two years, and not once have I been disappointed. My main inspiration to start playing drums was seeing Liberty DeVitto when I was fourteen. Other inspirations include Phil Collins, Stewart Copeland, Jeff Porcaro, Dave Weckl, Tico Torres, and Chester Thompson. I'd like to correspond with drummers in the U.S.A. Anyone interested can write to me at the address below.

Graeme Chart  
P.O. Box 18094  
Rand Airport 1419  
South Africa



## YOUR FRIENDLY CYMBAL REP

I am writing to give my personal praise and appreciation to a sales rep named Charlie Yannizzi, of the Zildjian Company. I have never met a more considerate and helpful individual in the music business. It was my pleasure to meet Charlie at the November '93 Percussive Arts Society convention in Columbus, Ohio. He spent a considerable amount of time with me and patiently helped me with a particular cymbal problem I was having. Zildjian should be very proud of this fine gentleman. I will never forget him. Thanks again, Charlie.

Charles Ankrom  
Carroll OH



## The heat's on the street...

the world's on fire with the passion and soul of percussion. Now, that fire burns even stronger as Meinl's incredible Livesound conga line makes its street debut here in America.

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Meinl's Floatune system. No shell penetrating or dampening hardware.



TMC heavy duty adjustable stand fits any size conga.



Meinl's 8" and 9" Congitas add new range to the conga family.



For more information on Meinl Percussion, send \$3.00 to: Tama Drums, dept. MDMP35, P.O. Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020 • P.O. Box 2009, Idaho Falls ID 83401.

## Jon Farriss

INXS is one of rock's most prolific outfits, releasing approximately one album annually. *Full Moon, Dirty Hearts* is not only their tenth album, it's one of their most ambitious. Drummer Jon Farriss' contribution can be heard on the band's chart-topping single "The Gift," which he wrote and on which he played all the instruments. "I was excited when I finally came up with the riff for that song," says Farriss. "I wrote the guitar, bass, and drum parts as the riff came to me. Most of the songs I've done in the past, like 'Disappear' and 'Faith In Each Other,' I've played the instruments on as well. But it wasn't con-

trived, it just worked out that way."

With the success of "The Gift" and the fact that it was the first single released off the new album, Jon is feeling understandably content. "I *am* pleased with it," he comments. "I had wanted it to be an unnerving, edgy song that was Beatlesque, because I really love their siren-like guitar sound, so that's what I went for. It's nice that we're using more of my songs, but basically, most INXS songs are Andrew's [Farriss, keyboards]. It's not a problem if I can't use more of my songs with INXS, because I'll use the material I write for other projects."

In the midst of a world tour with INXS, Jon has also recently found the time to produce an album in his home base of Hong Kong. Ai Jing is a Beijing vocalist who sings in Mandarin, and Farriss says he's thrilled to be working with such an unusual artist. "I love drumming; it's what I've done since I was four years old. When it comes to outside projects like production, I have to really believe in it. I won't do something just for the money. This project felt right to me, and it was something I felt I needed to do and that I could leave my imprint on."

• Teri Saccone

## David Beal

"It's important as a writer and a drummer to have a studio, so I had to provide the means for that," explains David Beal, regarding the start of his thriving second career—soundtracking. Out of financial necessity to maintain a New York City studio, and with the help of his technical and composing skills, David soon became involved in video and film soundtracking work.

Beal initially prospered through session drumming gigs. Not only does he now score for television and feature films, he also plays on his projects, primarily using an acoustic drumkit right in his own studio. Beal's studio is hooked up with a video editing suite just upstairs so that he and his partner can offer a complete in-house package.

Having worked for a spell with Michael Shrieve on a few soundtracking projects, Beal was anxious to do more. "I couldn't figure out how to get a foothold on this, and I found it very frustrating," he admits. "I approached it by submitting to either television shows or to film people. You have to constantly adapt your show reel to try and suss out what they want stylistically for the film, which can be tough. Also, as an artist you have to detach yourself emotionally, which is hard. I thought that



Photo by Adolfo Gallela

there had to be another angle to this, so I started submitting reels to smaller projects—documentaries, industrial films, European TV projects—often on spec. By getting to know the film editors involved, they referred me to bigger projects and put me in contact with directors. That got me in the door."

Additionally, Beal is also involved with a band project called 80 Worlds. A combination of world music, rock, and other various influences, 80 Worlds (which includes producer/ bass player Bill Laswell) is about to release their self-titled debut album. "We basically formed the band because we saw a big void in the industry and we wanted to play experimental grooves, not just 4/4. I also wanted to record the drums

in mono for a richer '60s vibe. I'm really excited about the results."

• Teri Saccone



## Bruce Carter

Bruce Carter has been filling Kenny G's musical requirements for the past five years. According to Bruce, who's in the midst of a world tour with the sax player, Kenny needs: "A lot of taste, a lot of finesse, and a lot of sensitivity. He needs players to be aware of what's going on on stage."

If you think a Kenny G concert is just a snooze time, think again, Carter says. "There are about five tunes in the live set

that are up tunes, and the band really cooks. A lot of people think because Kenny plays a lot of ballads, that's all he does. I like 'Songbird' because we really get a chance to stretch out. The second tune in the set is called 'Sade,' which is also a great slamming tune to play. The audience really gets into it.

"Then there's a song called 'Sister Rose,' where we set up in front of the stage. I'll bring out a snare, hi-hats, and

one China cymbal, and I'll play brushes. It's like a bebop tune, and it's one of my favorite things to play."

Carter adds that he also enjoys the duet he and percussionist Ron Powell finish off their individual solos with. "It's really a chance to stretch out. We may go from swing to mambo to samba, and it's a really exciting time in the show."

• Robyn Flans

## Brian Blade

One of the swingiest young cats on the jazz scene today is also a switch-hitter. When he isn't tatooing the ride cymbal and traversing the kit with tenor sax sensation Joshua Redman or alto ace Kenny Garrett, New Orleans' own Brian Blade can be heard slamming big backbeats in Daniel Lanois's rock band. And yet the twenty-three-year-old drummer doesn't see any kind of dichotomy between gigs.

"The fact is, I love music and I love to play. If the music is honest in its intention and tries to reach people with any type of message, that's what I want to play. Music is about community, regardless of what category you might try to attach to it. You're trying to be a part of something that hopefully will bring everyone closer to something special."

A native of Shreveport, Louisiana, Blade came up playing drums in his father's Baptist church. His high school band director, Dorsey Summerfield, exposed Brian to the music of John Coltrane, Miles Davis, and Coleman Hawkins. His jazz education continued upon

moving to New Orleans in 1988 to attend Loyola University. After transferring to the University of New Orleans in 1990, he came under the tutelage of such seasoned jazz pros as the venerable Ellis Marsalis, saxophonist Victor Goines, and drummer John Vidacovich.

The Lanois gig came about by chance. "He heard me at one of the jams at Cafe Brasil [a New Orleans nightclub where aspiring locals get together to compare notes on the bandstand]. After that, he suggested we get together at his studio and jam. Shortly after that, he asked me to go out on tour with him, which was really a great learning experience for me."

Blade can be heard on Kenny Garrett's *Black Hope* (Warner Bros.) and on Victor Goines' *Genesis* (AFO Records). Or catch him on tour with Lanois, when he isn't out swinging the Joshua Redman Quartet.

• Bill Milkowski

## News...

**David Ryan** on the road with the Lemonheads.

**Ricky Lawson** will be playing drums on Phil Collins' world tour, scheduled to start this month in Europe.

**Denny Fongheiser** has been touring with Heart, playing both drums and percussion. You can also hear him on their *Blessed Union Of Soul* LP.

**Kenny Aronoff** has been recording with Hank Williams, Jr., Billy Dean, and Patty Smyth for a movie soundtrack, Roger Allen Wade, Mac McAnally, Lyle Lovett, Sanne, Tad Benoit, Darlene Love with

Bill Medley, Shawn Colvin, Billy Pilgrim, Randy Newman, Bonnie Raitt, David Crosby/Graham Nash, and Cinderella.

**Ron Ganaway** has been doing dates and the recent video with Steve Warmer.

**Jimmy DeGrasso** stepped in for Alice In Chains drummer Sean Kinney when Kinney took ill during a recent Australian tour. DeGrasso was already playing with Suicidal Tendencies and just took over both sets. Suicidal Tendencies is currently in the studio.

**Ron Wikso** was recently in the studio with the Storm. He

also co-wrote two of the songs. In addition, he has been cutting tracks with Y&T guitarist/vocalist Dave Meniketti, Devon Meade, Gregg Guitierrez, Tamara Champlin, and a band called Joe 6-pak, as well as some jingles for Henry Weinhard's and Pabst. And congratulations to Ron on his '93 marriage to Dianna Johnson.

**Mark Brzezicki** has been on the road with Big Country.

**Johnny Dee** recently toured Europe with Doro Pesch. Johnny is also working with a new band in the States, When

Worlds Collide.

In the January 1994 issue of *MD* a news item implied that **Bill Bruford** was a member of Yes and would be touring behind the release *The Symphonic Music Of Yes*. It has been brought to our attention that this album featured Bill, Steve Howe, David Palmer, and the London Symphony Orchestra. Bill is not a member of Yes, and no tour to support the symphonic album has yet been confirmed.



# A Lot Of Our Ends Some Are Ev

Okay, so maybe the only thing Abe Lincoln ever pounded was a podium.

Nonetheless, a Noble & Cooley drum was commissioned for Lincoln rallies in Massachusetts and Connecticut in 1860.

It was made from a rail he split in Illinois, festooned with sterling silver hardware and red, white and blue silk cord.

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effective at getting crowds to their feet.

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Have you noticed how many drum-

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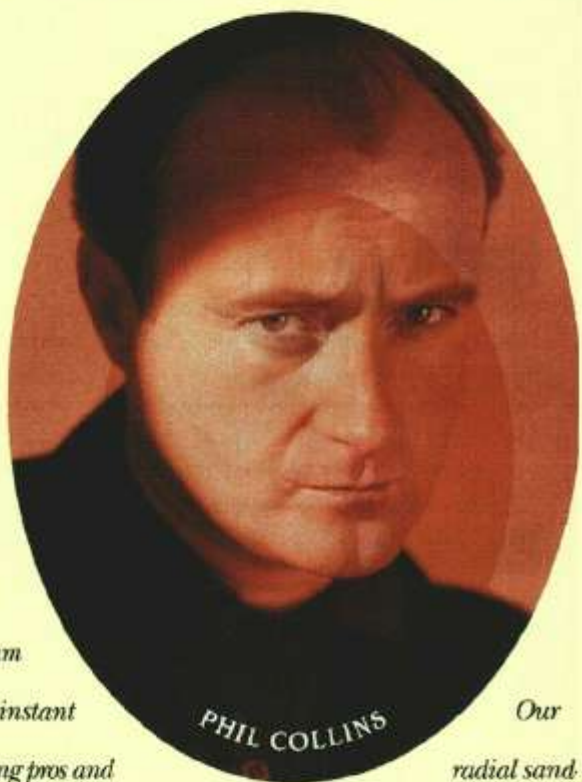


This aptly named drum became an instant legend among pros and old timers, who hadn't heard anything like it since the glory days of the Radio King.

We admit we're deeply gratified by the

influence our drums have had on the market. We're encouraged to see people getting back to the value of something made right.

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PHIL COLLINS

Our radial sand

er, for instance, was fashioned from a virtually flat and round element we salvaged from the nose section of a helicopter.

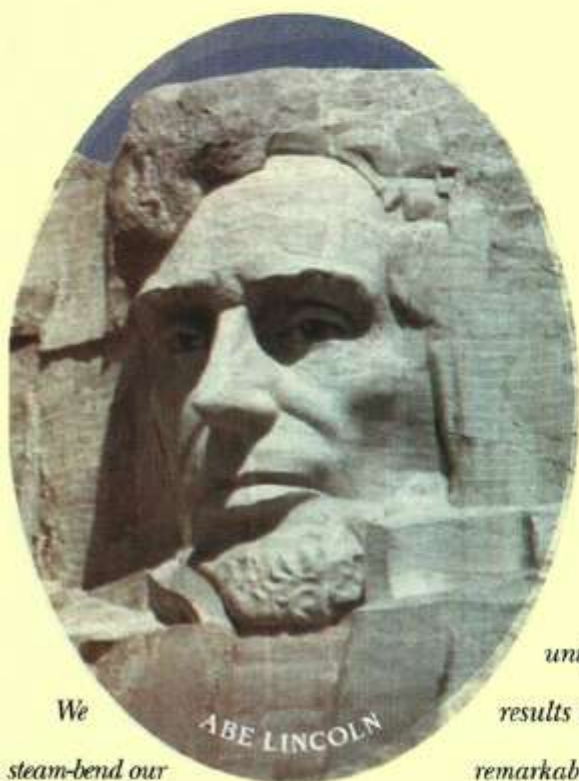
You simply can't sand edges to a more ideal consistency than this contraption does.

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## Carl Palmer



**Q** I'm a percussion major currently working on a project concerning classical percussion in pop/rock music. The work that you have done in this genre is quite remarkable. What got you interested in this kind of fusion? And how did you (mentally) go about incorporating it into your playing?

Rick Grimes  
Charleston WV

**A** All of my family are into music, so it was natural for me to take up an instrument. Classical music is something that is played a lot here in Europe—but being in a classical orchestra would not have been good for me because I like to *play*—and drummers don't play too much in symphony orchestras. So Emerson, Lake & Palmer was the right group for me to be in in order to play rock adaptations of classical themes.

The abundance of classical music to be heard in the U.K. helped me to prepare mentally to play that type of music. If you are going to become a full-time musician, you should learn as many styles as possible. Doing so will automatically give you more confidence. It is all in your hands as a player, and—if you think about it—it's only music, after all. Good luck in your studies!

## Vinnie Paul

**Q** I recently caught a Pantera show near Detroit, and I was impressed by how tight the band was. Your drum sound was very heavy—especially your bass drum/snare/ride cymbal combination (which was the driving factor in several tunes). I'd like to know what ride cymbal and snare drum you take with you on tour. Also, are you an endorser of Remo products, or are they actually your drums of choice?

Jes Beveridge  
Pierson MI

**A** I'm glad you dug the show in Detroit, Jes. The audiences up there are amazing, and it always seems that those are some of our best shows. To answer your questions, I use all Sabian cymbals, and my ride is a 22" AA *Dry Ride*. My drums are all Remo, including the snares, which are 8 1/2 x 14 with white *Falams K* heads on top. I am a Remo endorser—by choice. I think they are very distinct in their sound. Thanks for the letter, and keep your ears peeled for the new Pantera album, which should be out by the time you read this. Adios.



Photo by Joe Giron

## Rod Morgenstein

**Q** I really love how you "spice up" your playing by throwing in various offbeat splashes, crashes, toms, etc. Your style is unique and is a big influence on my playing. My question concerns your structuring of drum parts with the above-mentioned "spiced-up" beats. When you sit down to record drum parts for songs, are these "spices" parts that you have composed prior to the recording, or do you improvise them as you play?

I also want to thank you for your compilation and recording of *Odd Time*. It has really helped me allay many of my anxieties about playing odd times and rhythms.

Richard Lesniak  
Lexington Park MD

**A** Thanks, Richard. As far as "spiced-up" drumming is concerned, most drum fills and those long, slow fade-out endings to songs (where the drums are allowed to push the limit) are improvised. I may pre-determine certain licks or kinds of fills that would fit nicely in a particular section. However, from take to take they don't necessarily start in the same exact measure or on the same beat. With regard to drum beats, sometimes it's effective to work out specific patterns, as it gives identity and consistency to a song.

I'm glad that my audio tape/book on odd times has been of assistance to you. Like yourself, many musicians are perplexed with odd times when, in reality, it is a very logical, mathematical concept that, when broken down and dissected, can be understood by most anyone. Thanks again.



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**C O B R A**



## Working For A Drum Company

**Q** Like most drummers, my ultimate goal is to become a famous, well-respected musician. However, I'm well aware of the odds against this coming true, so I'm also examining other career-oriented goals. The one that appeals to me most is working for a well-known drum company. It seems to me that I would love such an opportunity to be around drums to make a living. How do I pursue such a career? Who do I contact? What kind of degree(s) would such companies look for in an employee? Any information you could offer would be greatly appreciated.

Mike Davidson  
Columbus GA

**A** There are many different employment possibilities within a drum company, and the necessary requirements would depend largely on what type of job you were seeking. Since you want to "be

around drums" we can probably rule out the accounting department, but other than that almost any job in a drum company will have something to do with the drums directly. Starting "at the bottom," so to speak, you could work in the factory or in the wholesale distribution center—either literally building or at least shipping the drums. If you have experience with designing and/or engineering—and perhaps a related degree in these fields—you might get into the R&D aspect of drum production. If you are a "people person" with good communication skills and the ability to react quickly to changing situations, you might get into artist relations. Sales or marketing don't necessarily require any degree (although one would certainly be helpful); a person's innate ability to negotiate, promote, and convince can sometimes be the key to success in this area.

Obviously a knowledge of drums and drumming will give you an advantage over

someone seeking employment without this background. Beyond that, a positive attitude and a willingness to take whatever position needs to be filled at the moment can lead to greater success later on. There are several people in key positions within the drum industry at this moment who started out "in the warehouse."

Be aware that the drum industry is not large, and employment opportunities do not abound. Additionally, economic times are still tough, and companies are keeping their work forces as small as production requirements will allow. However, there is always turnover in any business, and you should not be discouraged from approaching the company or companies of your choice. Your best bet would be to prepare a brief but thorough resume, outlining your background and special skills. Send that resume to the attention of the "personnel manager" at each company. (That's a generic title that will get your package into

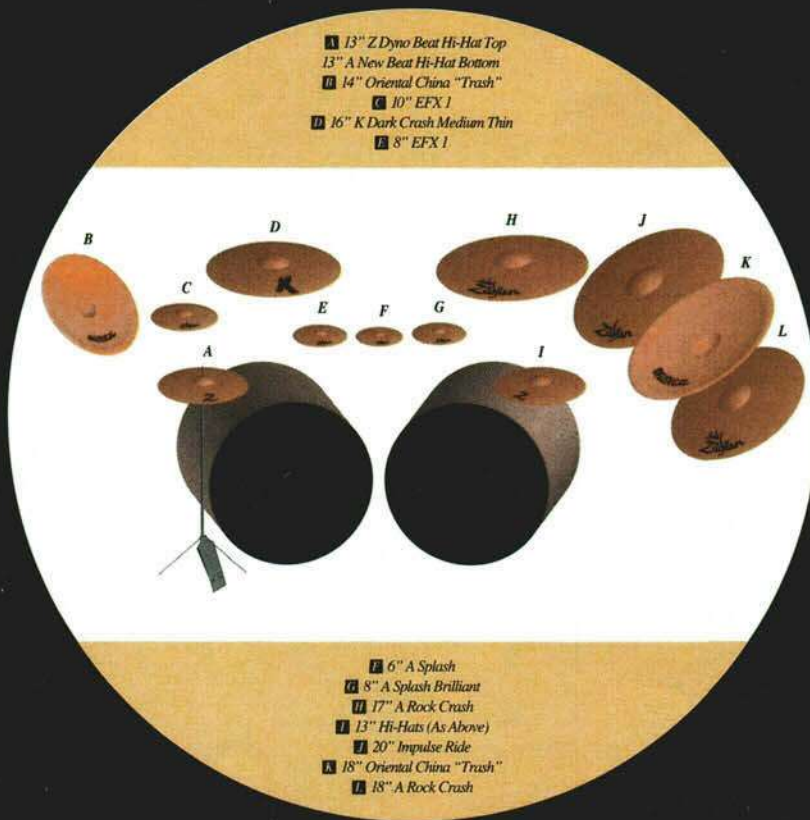
continued on page 50

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# TOMMY LEE

**H**ow many times have Motley Crue fans seen this? Tommy Lee cocks his arm high at ninety degrees, only for an instant, and whips it down with an expression of excitement matched only by the face a baby makes taking his first steps.

The beat slams so hard that the kick and snare threaten to cave your ears in. Lee's drumming is so infectious, though, that soon it's not so much the volume that's consuming, but the rhythmic intensity. The only difference now is that Lee isn't playing for thousands, but simply sitting cross-legged on the floor, air-drumming a few feet away from the stereo in his Vancouver, B.C. hotel room.

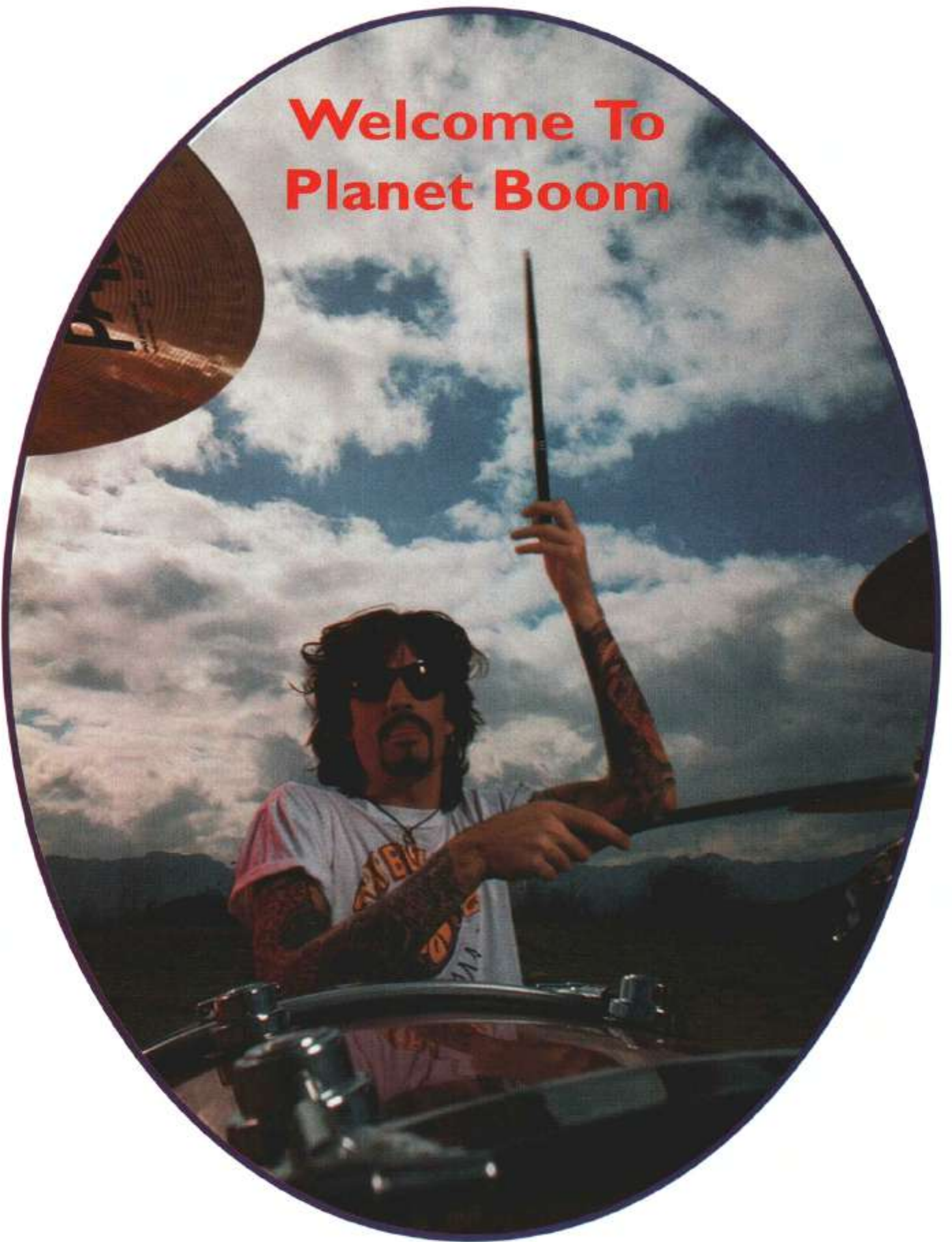
It's mid-September 1993, nearly a year and twenty-two songs into the recording of Motley Crue's album of rebirth, *Til Death Do Us Part*. There's still some taping ahead, but it's already clear this record is destined to be Motley Crue's finest—more complex, diverse, and undeniably heavier than any previous Crue collection. Just by glancing at Lee, you can tell he thinks so, too.

For fans of Lee's signature style, the record won't disappoint. He's gone back to a double-kick setup, combining the production value of 1989's *Dr. Feelgood* with an air of aggressive spontaneity last seen on the band's 1982 debut, *Too Fast For Love*. There's also "Welcome To The Planet Boom," Lee's two-minute solo piece incorporating looped drum tracks and studio out-takes wrapped in a techno-hardcore rhythm and underscored by a spicy narrative.

Lee and I laugh while reflecting on his first and only other *Modern Drummer* feature, a December 1987 cover story at the height of Motley Crue's glam era. Since then, the band has scored three platinum records while reveling in and subsequently recovering from several celebrated slices of strife—not the least messy of which was a litigious split with singer Vince Neil. That episode marks what the thirty-one-year-old drummer called the lowest point in the band's decade of decadence.

**By Matt Peiken**  
**Photos by Michael Bloom**

# Welcome To Planet Boom



Oddly, in recalling events leading to Neil's exit, Lee rarely referred to the former Crie singer by name. It was almost as if doing so would make the subject more difficult to talk about.

"We were trying to create for this album, but it just wasn't going anywhere. I couldn't believe this was happening to us," Lee said. "You could see a member of the band not contributing, not really wanting to be there. Things weren't really happening with him on a creative level, and we weren't getting along that well. He was

coming late for rehearsals and was totally unenthusiastic. So we talked to him, and the last straw was him saying, 'Go ahead and fire me.' He just walked out—we didn't even fire him—he just split."

Lee likened finding new singer John Corabi to installing "a new engine" in a classic car that had been headed for its last mile. "It was a punch in the jaw; it was like, 'Yes!' It was very inspiring for all of us," he says. "What's great is seeing John's excitement. It reminds me of when we first started out. He'll do something he's never done before and be so pumped. We got in a heli-

copter the other day for a photo session, something the three of us have done a million times, and John's sitting there tripping out! It makes my heart beat fast to see something like that, it really makes me feel young again."

The injection of enthusiasm, however, didn't alleviate pressure—publicly or internally—to create a stellar record. And on a personal level, the two years it took to see this record to fruition have been among the most trying of Lee's life.

"There's so much disarray in my world right now. We spent a year writing the record, and we've been in the



studio every day—we take Sundays off. My marriage is on the rocks; there's just no time for a relationship at this point. [Lee was married to actress Heather Locklear.] That's the toll this kind of life takes on you. You end up sometimes finding other things to relieve the pain and the pressure, like drinking a bunch or just doing other things that are de-focusing.

"And as for the band, we're all definitely under the microscope. We'll definitely lose a few fans who feel a loyalty to our last singer, but we'll hopefully gain more fans in return. And it's not going to happen by just putting out a

record with Motley Crie's name on it. It's going to happen by us writing the best music we've ever written and making the greatest record we've ever made.

"A lot of soul-searching has gone into this record—not just for me, but for everybody in the band," Tommy continues. "What are we about? What do we want people to hear? What's really in our hearts? We've all asked ourselves those things. I really believe things happen in life for a reason, and every time I listen to the new tunes and step into the studio to do more work, I know things worked out for the best."

**MP:** How have your musical tastes changed since you first started with Motley Crie?

**TL:** Wow, that's a tough question. I *know* they've changed to a degree, but it's difficult to say how. I think my taste has definitely gotten heavier. But that's not totally true because I've always liked a variety of music, a lot of styles, and I still do. I've always been a funk fan; I've always been a beat fan. Any song that has a killer beat is something I've liked. I never liked synth music, but these days there's some cool dance-vibe stuff that's more hardcore, with real guitars.

**MP:** It sounds like "Welcome To Planet Boom" was influenced by that kind of music. Where did your ideas for that piece come from?

**TL:** It was Bob Rock's idea for everybody in the band to have his own solo piece. Each guy's got to have two minutes to go off, do whatever they want to do, and have total musical freedom without anybody

else saying it doesn't fit the style of the record. All of us write music in our individual worlds outside of the band. So I put together this piece that's all drums, and I'm playing guitar and singing on it. It's just this hardcore feel with kind of a dance mix—not really dance, but a club mix. I've taken drum parts from outtakes and looped them together and put some other really cool shit on there.

Lately I've been going to clubs that play this kind of music, and I've always been drawn to these kinds of rhythms. So I just wanted to make some music for the people in these clubs—but in the way I know how to do it, and that's with drums. I play enough guitar to put together a groove people can slam to. I want this to be in freaky underground clubs and have people trip out to it.

**MP:** When did your interest in that kind of music develop?

**TL:** It's always been there, but it just seems more people are letting their psychotic side loose these days and turning out beats and rhythms that I can get into. Motley Crie has never been that kind of band, and I just felt this was the perfect opportunity to let this side of me show. I've thought about doing a solo project to get more into it, maybe between this Motley record and the next one. But Motley takes up so much of my time and energy, and I dig what we're doing so much right now that it's hard to think about anything else.

**MP:** It seems like you've put so much of yourself into this record, emotionally, which is amazing to me considering everything that's going on in your personal life right now.

**TL:** Exactly. But if it wasn't for the pressure of my relationship falling into disarray, I might not have dove into something like "Planet Boom" and looked inside myself deep enough to pull what I really

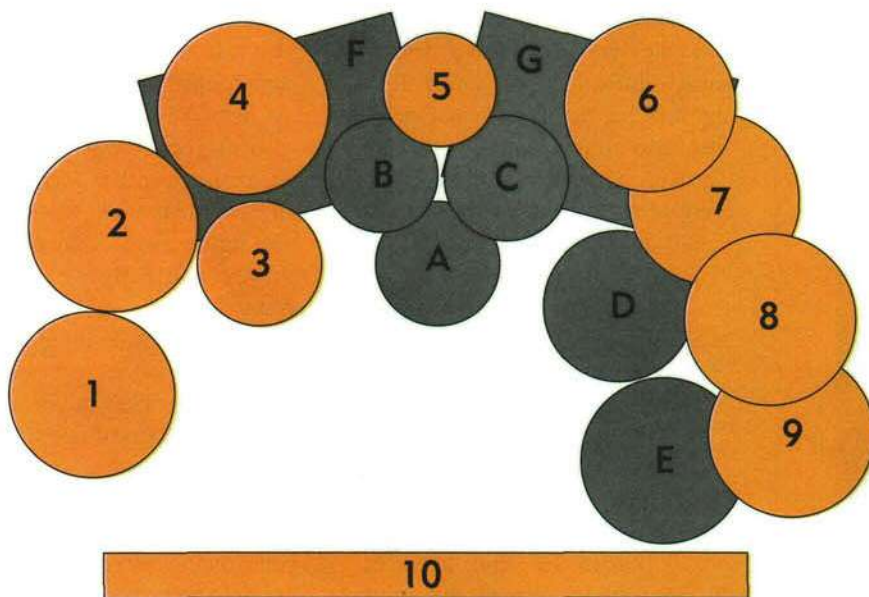


wanted out of me. I've seen everybody in the band dig down in their own way to come up with the most amazing stuff we've ever done.

We had to set new goals for ourselves because we'd already achieved a lot of goals we'd set for the band. And I think I've put a lot more creative energy into this record than I had before. I'm the first guy in the studio every day and the last to leave at night. I hung out in the studio all the way through, way after I was done playing. I'm a big-time studio rat, plus I'm protective. This is my baby; it's as much my record as it is the



## Tommy's Recording Setup



### Drumset: Drum Workshop

- A. 10 x 14 maple snare drum
- B. 9 x 12 tom
- C. 10 x 14 tom
- D. 14 x 16 tom
- E. 16 x 18 tom
- F. 18 x 24 bass drum
- G. 18 x 24 (or 14 x 26, 16 x 26, 32 x 24) bass drum

### Cymbals: Paiste

- 1. 18" *Reflector* Power crash (or 18" *Mellow ride*)
- 2. 19" *Paiste* Power crash
- 3. 14" hi-hats (various combinations of different models)
- 4. 20" *Paiste* Power crash
- 5. 12" *Paiste* splash
- 6. 20" *Paiste* Power crash
- 7. 20" *Heavy Bell ride*
- 8. 20" *Novo China*
- 9. 19" *Paiste* Power crash
- 10. 60" gong

**Hardware:** combination of DW and Sonor, DW *Accelerator* bass drum pedals

**Percussion:** LP cowbells, shakers, congas, timbales, chimes, and tambourines

**Heads:** Various combinations of Evans and Remo with custom reinforcement dots

**Sticks:** Easton *Tommy Lee* model

other guys'. I get freaked out, thinking that if I leave, somebody's going to put something really stupid down on tape. [laughs]

**MP:** As a producer, what has Bob Rock done for your drum sound? It sounded like he had a profound effect when he came on for *Dr. Feelgood*.

**TL:** We got turned on to him from a Kingdom Come record he produced. It was sonically cool, a great vibe. The drums were just bitchin', and the sound was off the floor! So we met with him and it turned out he'd always wanted to do a Motley Crie record. He did *Feelgood*, and that record ripped! But we've gotten a lot better since then and so has Bob. He did a Bon Jovi record and the last Metallica record. As far as my sound goes, it depends on the track, but it's usually the work Clyde Duncan, my drum tech, does along with our

engineer, Randy Staub, and myself. We just try to take each drum individually and get the best sound we can. Bob doesn't have a lot to do with that.

Our engineers are total sound-heads. They use a lot of cool miking techniques that are great for phase cancellation, and they like to get a lot of *size* out of the drums. And I like that because sometimes things don't translate on tape, but they work hard to make things sound as good as or better than they do live, and that's after we've already worked on getting a great live sound from the drum itself.

**MP:** Do you want your drums to sound differently now than you did maybe five or ten years ago?

**TL:** I used to be into sampling a lot, but I used samples on the past records more for sound reinforcement because it never sounded right coming from the floor to tape. The first three albums didn't have any sampling, and there was just something missing in the size of the drum sound. So for *Girls, Girls, Girls* I started reinforcing the ambient kick with a more open, sub-sonic kick from a sample. I can't remember what samples I used, but I just tinkered around with different ones until I found what filled the gap.

**MP:** Did that satisfy you?

**TL:** Yes and no. Temporarily it did, but in the long run it didn't because you can hear that it's a sample. It doesn't sound like a human playing it. Now they've got sensitivity in the samples, but you can still hear them being fired. I like hearing the ghost notes, which tells me the drummer's real and he's working his ass off. Ghost notes on a sample sound just like lower-volume versions of the hard note. All you can hear is the attack from the sample. I used to like that, but the more I listen to things and the more I play my drums, the more I appreciate the little things I do and learn that I don't want the sample.

Of course, I'm lucky to have guys working for us in the studio who can just get the drums slammin' off the floor. And I play great-sounding

**"I'd like to show people what I'm capable of doing as a player, and I think that's kind of been lost through the theme-park atmosphere of our shows."**

drums. It's a different situation live—where I do use samples—because you just need that sound reinforcement in an arena or stadium setting. Nobody's going to tell the difference, and it just eliminates a lot of nightmares you can have with getting a good live sound that will fill a hall.

**MP:** Speaking of which, you've also changed the brand of drums you use

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# Joel Rosenblatt

## *Drums Beyond Control*

Joel Rosenblatt's parents are like most—when he was struggling, they would have preferred it if he had become a doctor or a lawyer, instead of a musician. "So I did the next best thing," laughs the very good-humored Rosenblatt. "I married a doctor."

Joel met his wife, Toni, an emergency medicine physician, while he was in South Carolina on tour with Matt "Guitar" Murphy. Who says professionals and musicians can't mix, anyway? "Well, her parents," Joel responds with another laugh. "It was a hard sell. Her father is a doctor, and I didn't even finish college. They loved me, but they were worried. But once you're successful, everything is great."

With the success of Spyro Gyra, Rosenblatt's folks and in-laws don't have much to worry about these days. Joel joined the chart-topping jazz group a couple of years ago, having since recorded three discs with the band, including their newest, *Dreams Beyond Control*.

Rosenblatt actually started out at age eight on the trumpet. But after going to a Stan Kenton concert, he found that it wasn't the trumpet solo that stirred him, but rather the drums. Until college, he played drums just for fun, encouraged by his high school band director, Harry Owens. He was playing trumpet in the concert band and drums in the marching and jazz bands, but he never really took music seriously.

Things changed when Joel received an outstanding musicianship award at an event held at the Berklee School of Music. "There were a million guys getting them," he recalls, "but they called me up on stage, and people were applauding. I remember thinking, 'I could do this.'"

**By Robyn Flans**

**Photos by Jay Blakesberg**



## Listening in

Joel recommends the following albums to those who want to check out his playing.

Artist	Album
Michel Camilo	Sun Tan
Michel Camilo	Michel Camilo
Michel Camilo	On Fire
Spyro Gyra	Three Wishes
Spyro Gyra	Dreams Beyond Control
Paquito D'Rivera	Celebration
Tursten De Winkler	Humanimal Talk

And here are the ones he listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album	Drummer
Gonzalo Rubalcaba	Live In Havana	Horatio Hernandez
James Taylor	Never Die Young	Carlos Vega
Nik Kershaw	The Works	Vinnie Colaiuta
Keith Jarrett	Standards, Vol. 1	Jack DeJohnette
John McLaughlin Trio	Live At The Royal Festival Hall	Trilok Gurtu
Brecker Brothers	Heavy Metal Bebop	Terry Bozzio
Chick Corea	Three Quartets	Steve Gadd
Toto	Toto IV	Jeff Porcaro
Miles Davis	Nefertiti	Tony Williams

Weckl. He and I were roommates, which was a curse and a blessing at the same time. It was a blessing because he was such an ass-kicker. He was always forging ahead—real disciplined. I have a lot of respect for how much work he puts into honing his craft. I wasn't as focused as he was.

**RF:** That's got to be intimidating, too.

**JTR:** But it was good. It lit a fire under my butt. The curse was that I would never be on top. Before I met Dave, I thought I was really good, but I just didn't have anybody to compare myself to. When I met Dave, I realized how far I had to go. Dave was way, way ahead. He was phenomenal, even back then.

I had kind of made history when I went to the college because I was one of the first freshmen to make the "A" band. That added to my big ego. Then Dave came and humbled me completely by immediately bumping

me out of the "A" band. It was a hard dose of reality. The director just said, "Okay, Dave's in, you're out." That's the way the real world is. But Dave was great. He went to the director and said, "Look, Joel put in the whole year, so I'm not playing unless we can both play." That was very cool of him. So we became friends, and then the next year when there were auditions for the

**RF:** Did you have any formal lessons at all?

**JR:** When I was in college, at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, there were two teachers—Ed Soph and Randy Jones. I only went to college for a couple of years, because I realized just having a piece of paper saying I had a degree in jazz studies was never going to do anything to get me hired. It was costing \$6,000 a year, so I thought I just had to go out and play. I felt the way I was going to get gigs was to play well and be heard.

Those two years of college were great, though. I made contacts that I still value today. The best thing about going to college for music is being thrust into an environment that is real productive. There are always people wanting to play, and you can always throw a jam session together. And you can see how good you are, relative to other drummers. I came from being "the best drummer in New Jersey" with an ego so big I couldn't fit through the door. Then I went to college and got thrown in there with guys from all over. You see where you stack up, and reality sets in.

That's where I met Dave



band, he made it and I didn't.

**RF:** What did that feel like to you?

**JR:** It sucked. I was really upset and I figured I had to get serious. Dave was really supportive of me, and we worked out together.

**RF:** What did you do to buckle down?

**JR:** I'm lucky I have a lot of God-given talent because, up to that point, I was coasting. I started really working on things, listening to other people, and practicing.

I really got into Steve Gadd, who was extremely hot in 1979, and I was just trying to copy everything he did. I got a lot of rudimental things together because Steve is that kind of a player. And I started gigging. I didn't do my first professional gig until I was eighteen. Gigging with musicians was really what kind of shook me.

I credit Randy Jones with really turning me around. He hipped me to the fact that it really doesn't matter how you hold the sticks or how you sit. The only thing that matters is if the music feels good and if you make it comfortable for the other people to create. A big light bulb went on. I remember working out of the Jim Chapin book, *Advanced Techniques For The Modern Drummer*, which is the bible of swing, and I was struggling with playing it all and having it all work. Eventually, I got so frustrated that I bashed through the exercise. I was just mad. Randy said, "That sounded good, that had some emotion, you were saying something."

**RF:** Everyone else was hitting you with the rules?

**JR:** Exactly. "This is the jazz beat: ding, dinga, ding, dinga, ding. This is the rock beat—if you don't play this, it's wrong." He really hipped me to the fact that the feel is the most important thing. I try to have big ears and listen to what's going on. I definitely try to be an interactive drummer.



**RF:** Sometimes that's the difference between technique and feel. How do you integrate the two?

**JR:** They have to be integrated. You should never let the technique get in the way of the music. That defeats the whole purpose.

**RF:** What were you looking for your niche to be?

**JR:** I didn't even know. I don't even want to have a niche, even though I recognize that there are some things I play better than others. At that time, I just wanted a gig. I wanted to make some money. I was taking anything that came along. I was doing the wedding thing. I didn't turn any work down. I figured any time with sticks in my hands in a professional situation would be beneficial. You could be with a lame accordion polka band, but if you concentrate on just keeping good time, it will be worthwhile. I never felt I was too good for any kind of gig.

**RF:** What happened after you left college?

**JR:** I moved to Pelham, New

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## Joel's Kit

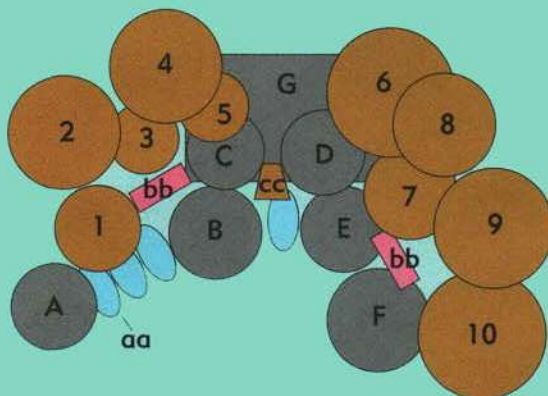
### Drumset: Tama Artstar II

- A. 5 x 13 maple snare drum
- B. 5 x 14 brass snare drum
- C. 10 x 10 tom
- D. 10 x 12 tom
- E. 12 x 13 tom
- F. 14 x 15 tom
- G. 16 x 22 bass drum

### Cymbals: Zildjian

- 1. 13" K/Z hi-hats
- 2. 16" Oriental China
- 3. 8" K splash
- 4. 16" A Custom crash
- 5. 8" A splash
- 6. 20" K Custom ride
- 7. 14" A Custom hi-hats
- 8. 15" K dark crash
- 9. 17" K dark thin crash
- 10. 20" K flat ride with rivets

- aa. LP Gajate bracket (pedal with cowbell attached)
- bb. KAT poleKAT
- cc. LP cowbell

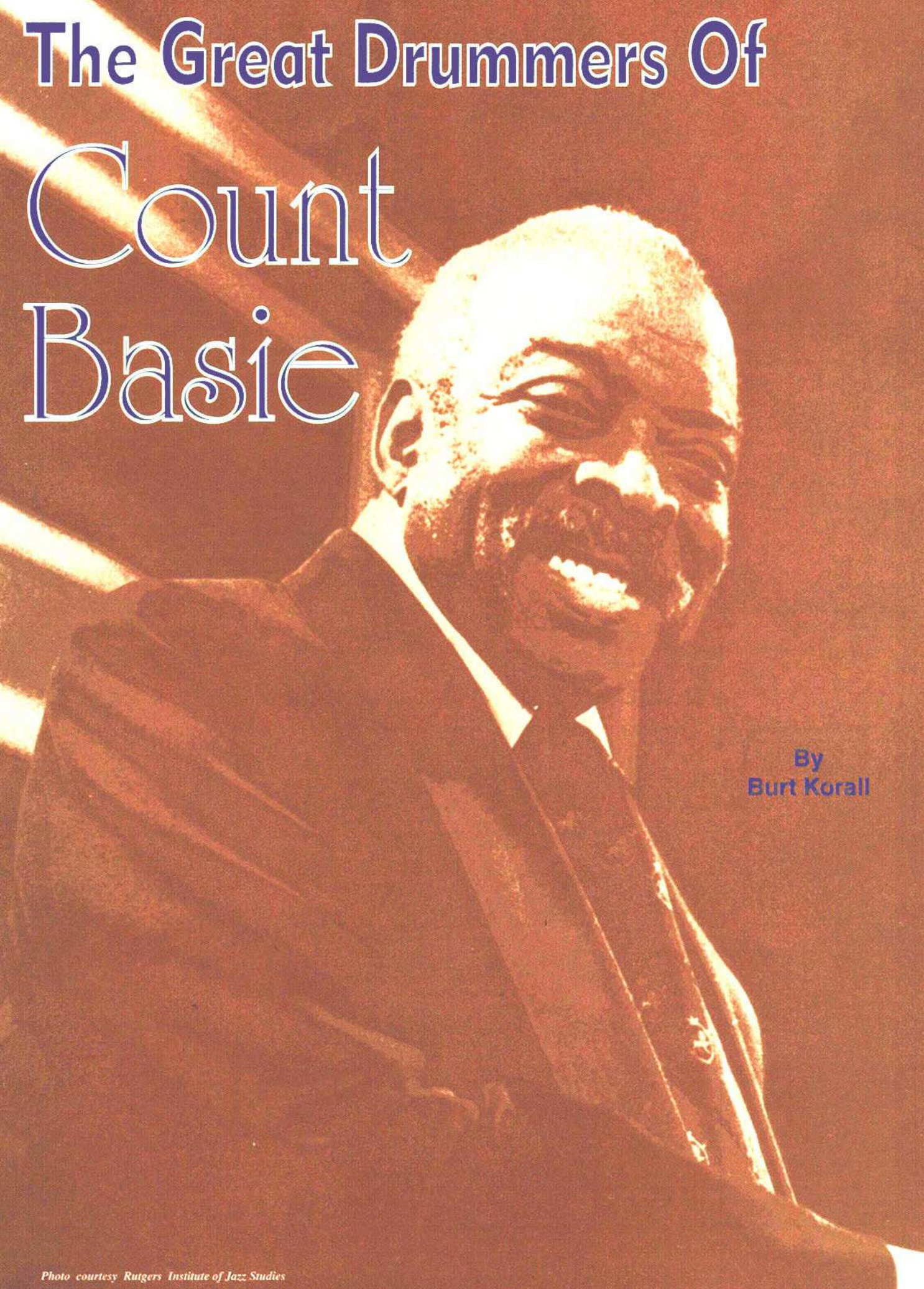


**Hardware:** All Tama, including a *Leverglide* hi-hat pedal, an *Iron Cobra* double pedal, and a Tama rack system (including mic' stands)

**Heads:** Remo coated *Ambassador* on snare batter, clear *Emperors* on tops of toms with clear *Ambassadors* on bottoms, *Pinstripe* on bass drum batter, *Ambassador* on front with 8" hole

**Electronics:** KAT *poleKAT*, Fishman triggers, Yamaha *DTS-70* interface and *RM-50* sound module, Roland *DR-500*, *SRV-2000* reverb unit, and *ME-12* mixer

**Sticks:** Vater *Blazer* or *Piccolo* (maple)



# The Great Drummers Of Count Basie

By  
Burt Korall

The drummer in the Count Basie band set the tone and established the "feel" and character of this unique ensemble. In some ways, the drummer was almost as important as Basie himself. The man in the "driver's seat" functioned as a deputy leader, driving the band, helping to shape the arrangements, giving the music a quality—a sense of rhythmic substance—that was particular to Basie.

Photo courtesy Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies



Jo Jones in rehearsal with Basie and bassist Walter Page



Photo by Frank Driggs

Shadow Wilson

## Jo Jones

Jonathan David Samuel "Jo" Jones (1911-1985), perhaps the most important drummer of his time, was the basic model for all who followed him into the Basie organization. Like tenor saxophonist Lester Young, his esteemed Basie colleague, Jones helped set a strong example of individuality in the swing period and in the years that followed.

Through his Basie years (1934-1944, 1946-1948), which were Jones' best and most influential, he began the liberation of the drumset, bringing to it many new techniques and ideas. His approach to music opened the way for modernists like Max Roach, and he remained a valuable, ever-evolving source of musical

insight until he passed in September, 1985 at age 73.

Who and what was Jo Jones?

He was an unusual man admired far and wide. I came to know his work when I was quite young; I came to know the man himself considerably later on. He was "super sensitive on and off the bandstand," says drummer Shelton Gary, one of Jones' proteges. Jones used to say, "First of all you are a human being. Then you try to become a man. And *then* you work on becoming a drummer."

As I noted in my book, *Drummin' Men, The Heartbeat Of Jazz—The Swing Years* (Schirmer Books/MacMillan), "Jo Jones was slick. A handsome man with a highly expressive face and communica-

tive eyes, he had 'the look of a matinee idol, particularly in the early years with Basie,' according to John Hammond. Lean, lithe, an erect, commanding figure at the drums, Jones was marvelously visual. And not only was he an attractive man, he had wide-ranging experience in reaching audiences; he knew every trick in the book.

"Beyond the surface characteristics and the 'show business' of Jo Jones was his work. The man was serious and deeply dedicated. His great natural talent for the instrument plus his strong desire to keep learning made for a powerful combination. Jones' impact, particularly during the peak years with Count Basie, essentially stemmed from a flair for the

unexpected and unusual, a firm sense of time, and the capacity to be convincing."

His recordings with the "early" Basie band that featured Lester Young, trumpeters Buck Clayton and Harry "Sweets" Edison, trombonists Dicky Wells and Benny Morton, and the "All-American Rhythm Section"—Walter Page (bass), Freddie Green (guitar), Basie (piano)—remain a marvelous experience. Jones swung quietly and deliciously without resorting to unnecessary noise. Not technically as accomplished as such virtuosos as Chick Webb, Gene Krupa, and Buddy Rich, he played breaks and solos that were simultaneously highly functional and inspirational—oh so fitting to their context.

Jones brought pulsation up to the cymbals, notably the hi-hat, making it a source of great interest and rhythmic vitality. He broke time, played supportive accents and "musical" fills, and gave rhythm a linear feeling, generally anticipating what the bop drummers would do in years to come. Freely flowing yet disciplined, his manner of playing was inspiring both to players and listeners. In essence, he changed the way time was kept and thought about.

Jones was a man who personified the history of black American music. Before joining Basie, he performed in a wide variety of circumstances, ranging from medicine shows and vaudeville to carnivals, circuses, girlie shows, and stylistically varied small and large bands. He absorbed all he heard and much of what he saw. Music flowed through his body; it was what made him go. Drum influences were multiple, but no one in particular shaped him.

The style he brought to the Basie band was essentially a product of his experiences in the Mid- and Southwest, with bands headed by Ted Adams, Jap Allen, Lloyd Hunter, Bennie Moten,

Grant Moore, Harold Jones, and others.

"It is not incidental that the way bands and individual players from these two sections of America expressed themselves often reflected the spaciousness of

the areas," I noted in the *Drummin' Men* chapter on Jones. "The rhythm was generally looser and lighter than in other places. Drummers allowed the beat to flow, so the rhythmic line straightened out—and ultimately became a rolling 4/4 in the Basie Band."

"Jo Jones was like Louis Armstrong," the late Joe Newman, a distinguished Basie alumnus, insisted. "He did a lot of things first. Techniques and attitudes that today's musicians take for granted, Jo developed."

Jones was equally adept and artful with sticks or brushes. He combined with his colleagues, particularly the lead trumpeter and his mates in the rhythm section, giving a band direction, while strongly contributing to its sense of proportion and form.

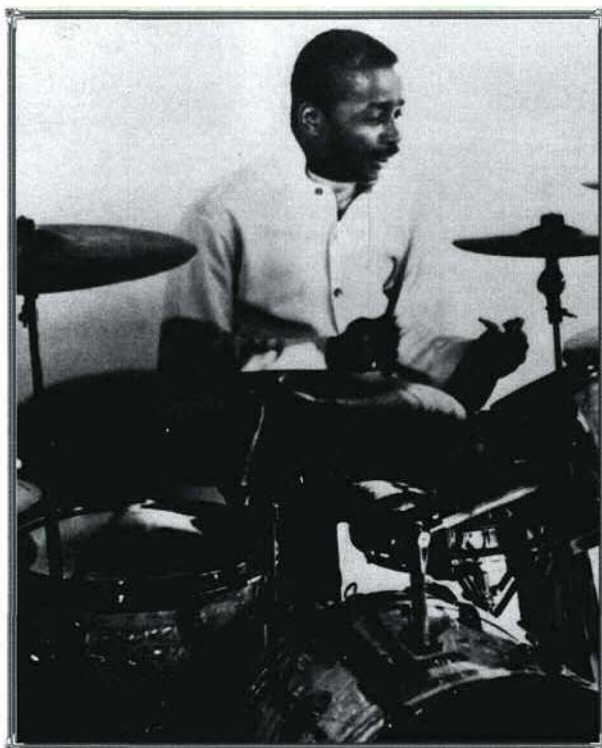
Drummer Cliff Leeman, who made quite a name for himself during the swing era with the Artie Shaw, Woody Herman, and Charlie Barnet bands, was in Kansas City at the Reno Club in the 1930s when Jones was at his most creative and beginning to attract widespread attention.

Like so many others, Leeman was convinced Jones could make music out of almost anything on drums. "Jo was the first person I ever heard keep time on a closed hi-hat while developing counterpoint-in-rhythm with his left hand on the hi-hat stand," he remembered. "So many things...how he changed accents and the feel of the dotted 8th and 16th rhythm [*actually more of a triplet rhythm*] without interrupting the flow...his kick beats on the bass drum behind Basie's piano—so unusual for the time....the way he tuned his drums—to intervals—also was a plus."

These and so many other highly captivating bits of business made Jo Jones "a killer." (There couldn't be a more flattering descriptive for a musician during the swing years.) Try "The Jitters" (from *The Complete Count Basie, 1-10, 1934-1941*, French CBS), a Tab Smith



Gus Johnson



Sonny Payne

chart recorded in 1941. It cogently tells the Jones story. The living hi-hat—he literally invented and re-invented what to do on the hat—the fills and time feeling are utterly marvelous. And a four-bar entry into the out-chorus is a revelation of simplicity that lifts the band up high—you can hear it!

Jo Jones left the Basie band for the second and last time in 1948 during an engagement at New York's Strand Theater. (He had been away for two years in the Army.) It is not quite clear why he suddenly departed, bringing his immensely fruitful fourteen-year association with Basie to a close on a questionable note. But that wasn't the end of the story.

Until Basie passed from the scene in 1984, Jones, who Mel Lewis called "the original bebopper," retained a strong link with his long-time friend and employer and the band that helped make him internationally famous.

### Shadow Wilson

Right before he left Basie, Jo Jones went out and got Rossiere "Shadow" Wilson (1919-1959) as his replacement. Wilson had played with Basie while Jones was in the Army, and Jones loved the way he played. In fact, Jones felt, "Shadow was the greatest natural drummer who ever lived."

The word was out about Wilson long before he joined Basie. He did excellent work with Tiny Bradshaw's band, Benny Carter, the Lucky Millinder band, Lionel Hampton (who still remembers him warmly), Earl Hines, and Bill Doggett.

"He was something even back in the '30s with Doggett's big band in Philadelphia," declares Philly drummer Charlie Rice. Billy Eckstine told me

that "Shadow was the best big band drummer I've ever played with." Joe Newman added, "Dizzy Gillespie, Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, Louis Jordan—all the cats, man—they loved Shadow." Gillespie used Wilson as a model for developing emerging drummers of the early to mid-1940s. And Wilson was Thelonious Monk's favorite drummer.



Harold Jones



Butch Miles

Saxophonist Al Epstein, who has played with just about everyone, provides very special insight. He recalls what happened when Wilson joined the Georgie Auld band at the Frolics in Miami in 1944, a few months before the drummer went with Basie. "He was responsible for a radical change," Epstein remembers. "It became a different band because of what Shadow brought to it. The pulse was like nitroglycerine—so explosive. His drums and cymbals had a different sound. He made everything swing so hard. Just to play the ride-out of an arrangement with Shadow back there was heaven to me."

I vividly remember Shadow Wilson with Basie. He wasn't visual like Jo Jones. In fact he didn't initially strike me as too graceful or technically gifted. But what he played was often unbelievable and felt so good. It just worked.

In many ways, Wilson was a visionary. He was one of the first to play lead-ins to figures in a big band, to use the bass drum for supporting sections and ensembles, and to bring the bass drum into play as a color resource and for accents behind soloists.

He contributed a great deal to the evolution of jazz drums by developing provocative, pleasurable, modern rhythmic ideas, combining the snare and bass drum in a manner that anticipated what almost all drummers would do a year or two later.

What Wilson played behind bands and soloists often was more interesting than the solos of the so-called virtuoso drummers of the 1940s. He didn't like to take solos, but when he did, the solos were *natural* and surprising. Their content, the diversity of the ideas and accents, and their inner movement inevitably made things more interesting.

He had his own sort of technique that frequently paid huge musical benefits. On October 9, 1945 in Hollywood, the Basie band recorded an unusually complex Jimmy Mundy original called "Queer Street" for Columbia. This song includes Wilson's masterpiece—a perfect, awe-inspiring, double-time two-bar break toward the close that drummers have been trying to duplicate ever since.

Every musician old enough to have been around remembers it. Drummer Chico Hamilton, who played with Basie briefly, sang part of it on the phone when we spoke about "Queer Street." Roy Haynes and Don Lamond also have committed it to memory. Buddy Rich once told me, "If a drummer doesn't know that drum break, he shouldn't call himself a drummer."

Very simply, Wilson was a genius when it came to enhancing music. His friends and even those who knew him superficially speak of him with great respect and warmth. Bandleader and drummer Charli Persip calls him "Mr. Wilson," and is

proud to have been his friend. Former Basie trumpet star Harry "Sweets" Edison says, "Shadow was a fantastic guy. He loved to gamble—we used to shoot craps in back of the Basie band bus. He was a great New York Yankee fan—a real sports nut. And he could *play*." Joe Newman, who worked with him in the Hampton, Basie, and Illinois Jacquet bands, commented on his rare spark as a player. The

legendary Illinois Jacquet always speaks of his awesome talent as an accompanist.

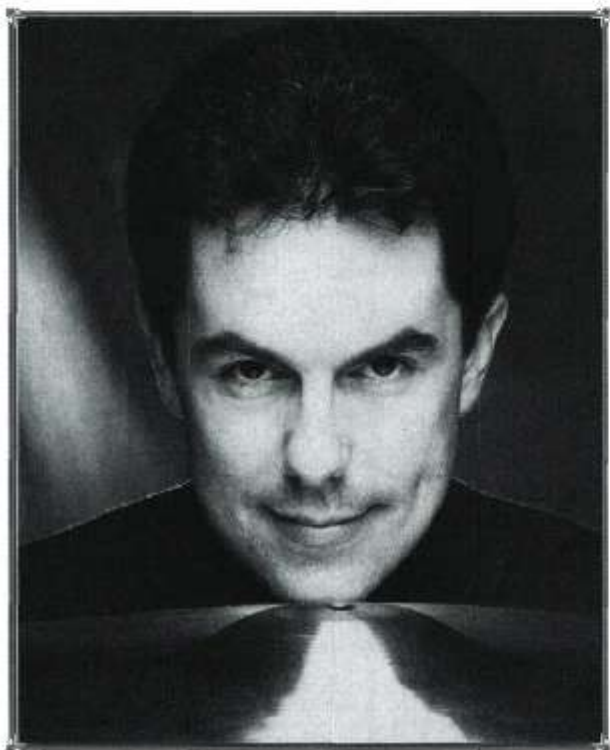
Drummer Phil Brown, who watched and listened to Wilson day and night for a whole week at the Apollo in 1951 while they both were appearing there—Wilson with Erroll Garner, Brown with Roy Eldridge—feels Wilson's ability to adjust to any musical circumstance and bring much of himself to it distinguished him as

much as anything else. He adds, "The guy touched me as a musician...and as a person. He was warm, always smiling, very gracious."

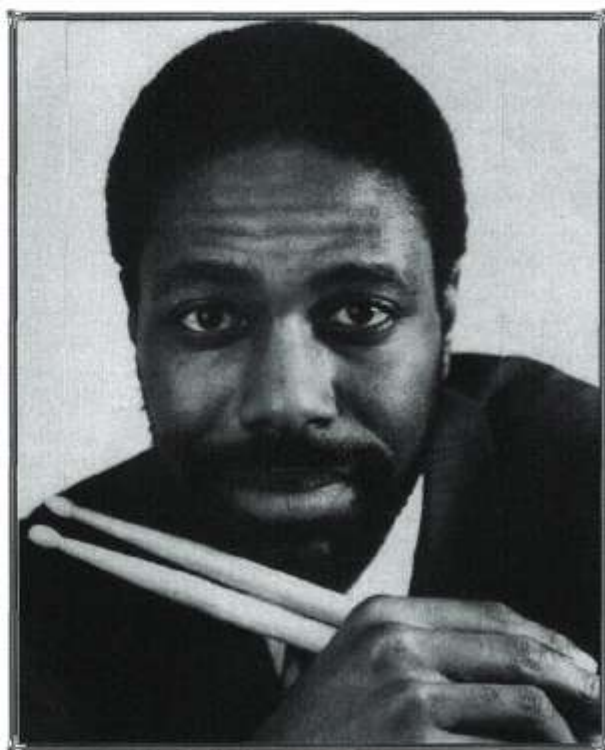
Though Wilson's life had many elements of brightness, it had a dark, tragic side. The drummer got caught up in narcotics, which destroyed him long before his time. Louie Bellson saw him shortly before his death. "He came backstage at the Apollo to hang out with me," Bellson recalls. "I was there with Pearl [Bailey] and our big band. He looked so bad and was in such terrible shape, I didn't recognize him. He said, 'Lou, don't you know



Duffy Jackson



Gregg Field



Dennis Mackrel

me? I'm Shadow.' It was very sad."

I suggest you focus on Shadow Wilson's good days and nights, though—documented on his recorded work with Basie, Monk, Erroll Garner, and a number of others. For the Basie period, the best you can do are the 1944-1946 Columbia recordings, collected by French CBS on an LP titled *Avenue C*—ever so hard to come by—and another obscure LP, *The Basie Special—1944- '46, (Every-bodys)*. The latter contains broadcasts by the band from New York's Hotel Lincoln.

The recordings tell you the most important things about Shadow Wilson—what he really was all about and what he meant to the music of his time.

### Gus Johnson

Gus Johnson (1913- ) exemplified subtlety and quiet swing during his stay with Basie. He first played in the small group the pianist formed in 1950, then stayed on to motor the new Basie big band that made its debut at Harlem's Savoy Ballroom in October of the following year.

It was unmistakable as soon as Johnson began to play with bands that he had his own concept. "I play to make others play. I always have," he once told me. "I'm not really a solo drummer. I don't care too much for that glory thing. I'm interested in keeping rhythm exciting, moving, filling holes, and tying things together.

"I've always admired drummers who work that way. Jo Jones, my teacher and idol, knew exactly what to do. So did Dave Tough—remember him with Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and Woody Herman's First Herd? And Sid Catlett. They swung without calling too much attention to themselves."

A native of Texas, Johnson matured rapidly when he moved to Kansas City to go to Sumner Junior College. After two

years, he knew that jazz music had to be his life. He was in the right place to learn; the ambiance was more than encouraging to the developing player or singer. The city was wide open. Jazz and blues clubs were numerous and open almost around the clock.

Johnson played with a variety of people, making his heaviest impression with Jay McShann in Kansas City. Then at the Savoy Ballroom in New York's Harlem in

lowes McShann's piano masterfully and never loses the basic beat, nor does he ever fail to thrill."

The 1942 McShann band was the pianist's most important. It put its own spin on the Kansas City style and the feeling Basie introduced to Gotham six years earlier. Not only that, the band featured alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, who proceeded to turn the New York music community around.

Johnson went into the service in 1943. After being discharged, the drummer made New York his home. He amassed a world of experience and expertise, playing with, among others, Earl Hines, Eddie Vinson, Cootie Williams, and Tab Smith, and listening to the great drummers on the scene like Max Roach, Kenny Clarke, and Cozy Cole.

Johnson continued to learn in the Basie band. For a little over four years, he kept seamless, natural time for this ensemble. He revealed a particular flair for dynamics, shaping each arrangement in a persuasive manner. Try two Verve recordings, *Paradise Squat* and *Sixteen Men Swinging*, covering the band's 1953 and 1953-'54 performances respectively. They show what Johnson could do in the big band context and are a comment on what bassist Eddie Jones, his former Basie rhythm section mate, feels is his

greatest virtue, "his great consistency as a player."

In December 1954, Johnson was hospitalized following an attack of appendicitis. Basie brought in Sonny Payne, "temporarily." The bandleader progressively came to the conclusion that his new drummer added something very special to the band. The

continued on page 97

## Buddy With Basie

One afternoon in 1952, I drifted into New York's Paramount Theater to hear Frank Sinatra perform to a half-empty house. (This was before the singer's second ascension.) I went backstage to say hello to friends on the Buddy Rich band. They told me that BR would be playing with Basie at Birdland later that evening.

I went to Birdland and stayed at the club until the place closed at 4:30 A.M. Why? BR with Basie was perfect. He played as only *he* could, when he wanted to. The band remained his concern the entire night (and early morning); he was the ideal sideman. His time, lead-ins, fills, and occasional solos were bracing and often surprising in their strength and relevance. His love for Basie and swing time were unmistakable.

When we became close years later, BR frequently told me that he would travel anywhere to play with his hero's band, that it was an *honor*. Louie Bellson played very well when he filled in with Basie. Jones, Wilson, Johnson, Payne, and the others had great nights. But BR with Basie at Birdland was the most unforgettable of all.

• Burt Korall



1942, he was noticed by one of America's most important and discerning critics. Writing in *Metronome*, Barry Ulanov declared, "Gus Johnson sits happily behind his drums, and his drums sit happily behind the band, for Gus is an expert drummer, with power and with excellent technique. His repetitions of brass figures and his introductions thereof are delightful. He fol-

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# Kenner Custom Show Series Drumkit

by Rick Mattingly

**Excellent sound and unique appearance set this kit apart.**

The Kenner Drum Company achieved its initial notoriety with snare drums, first with drums sold in kit form for the do-it-yourselfer (reviewed in the March '92 *MD*), then with drums made from cast aluminum, cast bell brass, and Australian cardinal wood (reviewed November '92).

The company is now making full drumsets with maple shells that live up to the high quality of the earlier products. The set we received for review consisted of an 18x22 bass drum, 10x10, 10x12, 12x14, and 14x16 toms, and a 4 1/4 x14 snare drum.

As soon as I took the drums out of the boxes I was struck by their visual beauty. The toms and bass drum were stained "Venous Red" and protected with several coats of varnish, which was polished to a high gloss. The bass drum hoops were finished in natural maple, which looked great against the red shell and also matched the natural finish on the snare drum, which had maple tube-lug covers and a maple knob on the strainer that were stained to match the tom shells. Even the claws on the bass drum hoops were covered by red-stained maple.

Okay, so it was possibly the *best-looking* kit I'd ever seen. But drums are to be played, not just looked at, so I was eager to see if they had a sonic beauty to match their visual appeal. For the most part, they did.

The tom-toms were a delight, with a focused attack and plenty of sustain. Each responded well over a reasonably wide tuning range, but they were at their best with lower pitches, sounding bigger than their head sizes would indicate. The 16" drum in particular had a rich, full bottom end that was deeper than some 20" bass drums I have known. Each tom-tom was fitted with a Remo coated *Ambassador* top head and a clear *Ambassador* bottom, and was equipped with a RIMS mount.

The bass drum came with Evans *EQ3* heads, and sounded deep, dry, and incredibly punchy right out of the box with no other



dampening. When playing the drum by itself at full volume in a small room I could detect a slight rattle that might have been a lug vibrating against its post, but I was never able to identify it. When I played the drum in a larger room with hi-hat and snare drum going, I didn't notice it. Overall, the drum produced a huge, concert rock sound.

The snare drum sounded a little thin compared to the huge sound of the bass drum and the very full sound of the toms. It had plenty of high end, which is characteristic of thinner snare drums, and produced an excellent crack sound when struck with rimshots. The snares were extremely sensitive right out to the edge of the drum. Under ordinary circumstances the drum would have sounded excellent, but in the context of the huge sound produced by the other drums, I found myself wishing for a snare drum with just a bit more body.

In terms of construction, the tom-toms and bass drum were made from 8-ply maple and had 45° bearing edges. The bass drum hoop was made from 10-ply maple, and was covered in leather where the pedal attached. The interior of each drum was sealed with a three-coat natural finish. Each logo badge was inscribed with the customer's name.

All drums featured solid brass tubular lugs with nickel chrome

finish, each held by two posts attached to the shell with one screw each. There were insulating gaskets between all metal parts and the shell. The two small toms had six lugs each, the large toms had eight lugs, and the bass drum had ten.

The maple-covered bass drum claws on our test kit are an optional feature on Kenner bass drums. They're protected by brass ferrules inserted into each one to prevent the tension screw from damaging them. The wood claw covers are visually very attractive, but add \$300 to the cost of the drum.

The snare drum was constructed from 9-ply maple and had 9-ply reinforcing hoops. There were ten tubular lugs with maple covers, and the tension rods and lug posts were brass. The hoops and strainer were die-cast, and the snare release was the horizontal cam-lever design. The wooden knob on the end of the release lever was hand-carved. The drum was fitted with Remo *Ambassador* snare and batter heads.

My one reservation about the snare drum is that the snares were attached to the strainer and butt plate with screws that require a hex wrench. Should the tape holding the snares come loose or

break during a gig, many drummers would prefer a unit that used a drumkey (which drummers always have handy) or at least a standard screwdriver. Kenner does supply a hex wrench with the drum, however, and the manufacturer points out that hex-head screws are not as prone to breakage as are drumkey-operated screws.

Kenner's *Custom Show Series* kit rates very high in terms of sound, construction, and especially visual appeal. List price of the 18x22 bass drum is \$875, plus \$300 for the optional maple claw covers. The 4 1/4 x14 snare drum is \$650, and tom prices are: \$450 for the 10x10; \$475 for a 10x12; \$525 for a 12x14; and \$620 for the 14x16. Tom prices include RIMS mounts, mounting bracket, and tom arm. On orders totaling \$2,500 or more, a Gibraltar rack is included at no additional charge. After a set is ordered, expect construction to take eight to ten weeks.

Kenner offers a variety of sizes and over a dozen finishes. For further information, contact Kenner Drum Company, Rt. #1, Box 150, California, KY 41007, (606) 635-5218.

## Septimbre Snare Drum

by Rick Mattingly

In recent years there has been a trend away from huge multi-drum and- cymbal setups as drummers strive to get the most from fewer instruments. Besides using a variety of sticks and mallets to produce different effects, many drummers are seeking instruments that are versatile in terms of tone and color.

Towards that end comes the *Septimbre* snare drum from Robinson Percussion, which features three snare-strainer units fitted with three sets of snares: wire, gut, and cable. The drum gets its name from the fact that there are seven timbres available: 1) wire alone, 2) cable alone, 3) gut alone, 4) wire and cable, 5) wire and gut, 6) cable and gut, and 7) wire, cable, and gut. I tried them out in exactly that order on the 6 1/2 x14 drum *MD* received for review.

With only the wire snares engaged, the drum was very bright and crisp, and snare response was excellent all the way to the edge of the head. The drum was sensitive enough for *pianissimo* buzz rolls, but didn't sound choked when I really whacked it. The thick wood shell also gave the sound plenty of body.

Using only the cable snares, the drum still produced a bright sound, but it was considerably drier and had a more military tonality. At extremely soft dynamic levels the snare response was lost about an inch from the rim, but that's somewhat typical with cable

snares. (If one set of snares did everything, you wouldn't need a drum like this.) Overall the snare response was good, and buzz rolls came off pretty well. But the tonality suggested a more rudimentary style of playing, and the drum sounded great with double-stroke rolls at most dynamic levels, although it sounded a little choked at full volume.

The gut snares had a dry sound similar to the cable set, but with a much darker color, suggesting a field drum. The snare response was virtually the same as with the cable snares, but the drum



didn't sound choked at all when played loudly.

Combining wire and cable produced a tonality that was very similar to using wire only, but with enhanced articulation. Compared to the cable-only sound, this combination was brighter and not as dry. Of the seven possible settings, this one might be the most useful for general playing.

Using wire and gut together did not sound significantly different than wire with cable. Again, snare sensitivity and brightness were combined with increased articulation.

By using cable and gut snares together, the overall sound covered a little more of the tonal spectrum, having a little more low end than with cable only and being a little brighter than with gut only. General articulation and response was virtually identical to using either of the sets by itself.

Finally, combining all three sets sounded essentially the same as using wire with either cable or gut, but articulation was very slightly enhanced.

In terms of the seven timbres, how practical that is will depend on the situation. Using each of the snare sets individually or with a wire and cable combination will give you four distinct sounds that will be obviously different in just about any situation. The differences between wire/cable, wire/gut, and wire/gut/cable are extremely subtle and might not be significant in a lot of live situations. In the recording studio, of course, even a minute difference

can be significant.

In terms of construction, the drum was very solid and appeared extremely durable. The shell was made of 8-ply cross-laminated maple with staggered seams, and also had 6-ply cross-laminated reinforcement hoops. Bearing edges were smooth, and the bottom edge had a shallow (but very wide) snare bed. The shell contained two air vents on opposite sides of the drum: one near the batter head, the other closer to the snare head. The drum was finished in a highly polished black lacquer that looked like the finish on a grand piano.

The most distinctive feature of the hardware was the triple snare strainer assembly, which consists of three individual strainers mounted side by side on a metal plate. The snare release levers (mounted on the opposite side of the shell from the snare tension adjustment screws) are a vertical-drop design that provided extremely smooth operation. The eight tuning lugs are the traditional tube style and each one is attached to the shell with two screws. All hardware is chrome-plated brass.

The shell and tube lugs are manufactured and assembled by Kansas City Drumworks. The triple snare strainer and bottom hoop, with its extra-wide snare gate, are made by Robinson Percussion, who also installs the snare units. In addition, Glenn Robinson "breaks in" and tunes each drum before shipping it out.

Robinson himself is the former principal percussionist with the Cincinnati Symphony, and most of the drum's current endorsers are also symphonic players. But Robinson reports that both Billy Kreutzmann (of the Grateful Dead) and Billy Cobham also own his drums, and the *Septimbre* brochure claims that the drum has "innumerable, unexplored possibilities for drumset players: power and projection for rock, versatility for studio, and sensitivity for the creative jazz artist."

Personally, I would put "studio" at the top of the list, since session drummers often carry several drums to get a variety of sounds, and the different tones available with this one drum could cut down on their cartage. A typical club-date or wedding-band drummer—who often has to cover a variety of sounds and styles within an evening—might also find the *Septimbre* drum more useful than would a drummer who specializes in a particular type of playing. I agree that the drum can produce power and projection for rock as well as sensitivity for jazz, but a lot of players in those genres only need one or the other, not the variety that the *Septimbre* drum can produce. Also, a lot of players might not want to fool with the inconsistencies of gut snares, which produce a very specialized sound. A drum that simply combined wire and cable snares might be enough for many players' requirements.

At any rate, it's up to individuals to assess their needs, so I'll just conclude by saying that the *Septimbre* drum is indeed versatile and well-constructed. Drums are available in two sizes: 5 1/2 x14 and 6 1/2x14. List price of each is \$1,295, which includes a soft case and shipping within the United States. More information can be obtained from Robinson Percussion, 517 SE Country Lane, Lee's Summit, MO 64063, (816) 524-9105.



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.0002 microbars) than their wooden counterparts—that's like increasing your band's PA from 200 watts to 400 watts. Yes our distinguished experts concurred full-heartedly on the excellence of these revolutionary sticks. (O.K. what they really said—"These sticks Kick Ass.")

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Photos by Anthony Savoy

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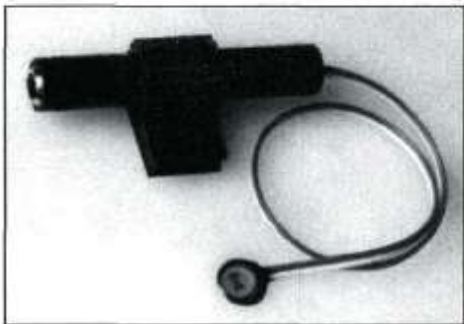
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by Rob Fedson

**Small, affordable, and efficient—what more could you want from a pickup line?**

K&K Pickup Systems markets a full line of acoustic triggers and miniature microphones for use on drumsets and percussion instruments. Some feature unique designs, others fit the traditional mold of head-contact piezo triggering. This German company is now beginning to make strides in the world market with hand-made products that are solidly constructed and very reasonably priced. I tested all of the trigger products using an Alesis *D4* module as the sound source and MIDI converter. The instructions for some of the products are oriented towards the *D4*, but these triggers can be used with any of the popular controllers currently available.

## Trig Star, Trig Star Pro

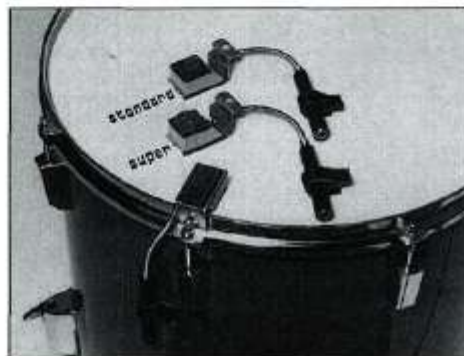


These two products are K&K's most standard contact trigger models. They each feature a very small element that attaches to the head near the rim, and both are light enough so as not to affect the sound of the drum.

Both models feature a hard plastic brace and adhesive-tape bracket to affix the 1/4" jack to the drumshell. The only difference between the two models is that the *Pro* version replaces the plastic jack with a metal "Switchcraft"-type connector. K&K is proud of their "hyper-thin" tape, which attaches the pickup to the head. However, they still recommend the use of a small piece of gaffer's tape over the pickup to ensure stability and protection. Performance of these triggers on both snare and toms was on a par with other systems available, but I am not totally convinced that they could take the inevitable "trigger bash" that almost all of us render occasionally. These units are priced at a suggested retail of \$29 for the *Trig Star* and \$33 for the *Trig Star Pro*.

## Trigger Guard

The K&K *Trigger Guard* system is a head-contact trigger that uses a foam damper between the pickup and the drumhead.



One mounts the trigger to the drum by removing a tension screw and securing the trigger to the rim. This is a solid and fairly permanent system that creates less inconvenience when changing heads than do the usual "sticky triggers." A special vibration dampener is included with the kit to lessen sensitivity for use with toms. The attached cable is about 5" long and is shielded by a sturdy metal spring. This is a bit too long for some snare drums but perfect for a floor or rack tom. Overall the construction of the *Trigger Guard* is very sturdy, and the trigger should remain reliable for years. In fact, this system was created in response to the previously mentioned "bash."

The *Trigger Guard* system comes in two varieties: The standard version is recommended for toms, and a super-sensitive version is suggested for snare drums or very light playing. Being more of a jazz-style player, I enjoyed the super-sensitive model because it would trigger the more subtle nuances of light snare licks. Of the various K&K designs, this is my favorite. The suggested retail prices are \$60 for the standard *Trigger Guard* and \$62 for the super-sensitive version.

## Rim Spot

The *Rim Spot* is designed to trigger only from a rim hit and not from contact with the drum head—allowing for a two-zone approach to triggering snare drums. The trigger slides between a lug and the rim, and with the special plastic distance bracers provided



can be made to fit most any manufacturer's rim design. I had better luck on snares with the more solid die-cast hoops than on lower-quality drums. Occasional double triggering would occur if the drum was not securely mounted to the snare stand. It's also important to point out that once the *Rim Spot* is secured between

the rim and the lug, the lug is locked out of use in spot tuning. The *Rim Spot* retails at \$33.

### Kick Guard, Kick Star

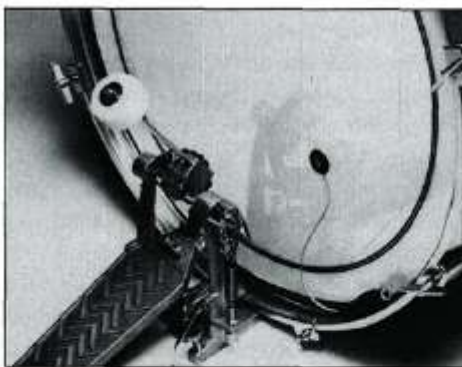
The *Kick Guard* is a unique approach to bass drum triggering. The trigger is housed inside of the beater itself. The beater is a standard-length shaft with a hard wood cube. A metal plate and a thick felt circle cover the pickup, and a strong, spring-covered



cord trails down the shaft. Sliding along the cord is a clamp for attaching the cord to the drum shell, thus keeping it out of the way during playing. The theory is that no false or double triggering

can occur if you're not playing the drum. Theory being just that, I had a hard time with the *Kick Guard*. For strong, loud players this could be a dream come true, but if you tend to "feather" the bass drum at all, bad things can happen. The basic problem is that, although your acoustic bass drum can sound good at soft volumes, MIDI-triggered sounds often don't fare as well. In addition, I was a little bothered by the general weight and feel of the beater, which was extremely light—though I suspect that any of the several adjustable shaft weights available on the market could fix this in a hurry. This is a solid and original concept whose time has not yet come for me.

The *Kick Star* and I got along much better. Even though it was less sensitive, I could control my style of playing much more efficiently and obtain a better mix of when I did or did not want the



trigger to fire. Essentially the *Kick Star* is a *Trig Star* with a longer cable and a larger cushion around the element. The cable is long enough to use the *Velcro* to fasten the cable jack to either the shell or the inside of the hoop and

still place the pickup close to the impact point. I also enjoyed the *Kick Star* when it came time to pack up my kit. While with the *Kick Guard* I had to disassemble the beater from the pedal, the cable

from the drum hoop, and the cord from the *D4*, I pulled one cable from the *Kick Star* and put the drum in its case. Suggested retail on the *Kick Guard* is a whopping \$110; the *Kick Star* is priced at \$38.

### Trig Master



The *Trig Master* is a ten-channel rack-mount unit designed to improve the quality of any triggering interface—and it works! This unit combines the qualities of an equalizer and a noise gate. The unit's analog filters remove all of the pickup's signal with the exception of the attack portion of the sound. This allowed me to lower the sensitivity settings on the *D4* and still achieve quick, accurate triggering. This feature can help the jobber who deals with a different set of ambient stage vibrations every night. The *Trig Master* has two channels devoted to the frequency response of a bass drum beater, while the other eight channels are suited for any "stick" attack. K&K asserts that all drums, regardless of size and tuning, have basically the same fundamental frequency at the instant the stick touches the head. The bass drum beater has a different response, so special channels are needed. They are also quick to point out that this unit is designed only for acoustic drums. Kids, don't try this on your pads! If you are having trouble getting fast, isolated triggering out of your lower-end system, the *Trig Master*, priced at \$298, could be an inexpensive solution.

### Hot Cymbal, Hot Hi-Hat

Cymbal miking is a chancy process at best. Throw up a couple of overheads, and your swish buries your ride and you can never get enough out of the hi-hat. Try to mike each cymbal and the sound man screams, "Not enough channels, dude!" When you finally agree on one overhead for simplicity, no one is happy.

K&K's *Hot Cymbal* may win the award for smallest mic' in the universe. Made to attach to the cymbal at the center hole and rest between the cymbal and the felt, this tiny mic' has a short cord that clamps to the cymbal stand. This makes



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the *Hot Cymbal* nearly invisible. You can also run up to four mic's in a parallel mode so that they only take up one channel on the board.

"Ah, but how does it sound?" you ask. Not bad, not great—just good. The mic' has a special bass-cut filter that keeps the low overtones from rumbling away as the cymbal decays. This feature provides a sound as clear as that of any good mic' a few feet away—although I had a little trouble controlling an "edge" that seemed to take away the warmth from some of my darker cymbals. Given their low price (only \$35 each) and their ability to run in parallel, *Hot Cymbals* offer a very real chance for drummers to fully mike their cymbals without taking up too many channels on the board. And there are no mic' stands to haul around, either!



By far the coolest product from K&K Pickup Systems is the *Hot Hi-Hat*. This miniature condenser mic' is built into its own cymbal-avoiding gooseneck that clamps right onto the hi-hat stand. I checked them out with cymbals as big as 15" and had no trouble getting good placement.

The mic' sounds great. It has an amazing frequency response of 50k-20kh and takes sound pressure of up to 130dB. This allows close placement for great isolation and a very transparent sound. Even when I mounted the mic' to a cheap hi-hat stand I experienced very little shock noise. (A little well-placed gaffer's tape could eliminate it completely.) This amazing mic' retails at \$157—well within the range of its competitors. If your mixer does not have phantom power on board, K&K offers a separate power supply priced at \$55.

### Conclusions

All of the products in the K&K line are solid performers. Some are better-suited for different playing styles and setup conditions. The triggers all did their job without hesitation and all were improved by the unique *Trig Master* unit. The *Hot Cymbal* mic' is a neat way to achieve a no-fuss multiple-cymbal miking system, and I can't say enough about the *Hot Hi-Hat*. And for percussionists out there looking for new ways to mike that berimbau or cabasa, K&K offers literally dozens of other transducer-based microphone systems aimed at several different traditional and ethnic instruments. For more information, contact K&K Pickup Systems, 3016 25th St., San Francisco, CA 94110, tel: (415) 282-1562, fax: (415) 282-5072.



# A Gripping Performance

Vic Firth's *American Concept* drumsticks combine Vic's dedication to product performance with the creative musical insight of today's innovative artists. Crafted in honey-hickory for durability and rich color, these new models feature distinctive tip shapes for bold new cymbal sounds or unique gripping surfaces for enhanced drummer performance.

## HAMMERHEAD

*Hammerhead's* unique design concentrates weight behind the tip's striking surface, producing bold, dark cymbal and drum sounds. A powerful stick. L=17", T=.615".



## VIPER

Vinny Appice's *Viper* features a knurled "diamond-back" surface for enhanced gripping. Its thick neck and long tip withstand the most aggressive styles. L=16 1/2", T=.600".



## POWERPLAY

Kenny Aronoff and Vic designed the *PowerPlay's* special grooves to provide extra grip for the last three fingers of the hand, leaving the thumb and forefinger free for even greater control. Ideal for heavy rock—no matter how hard you hit! L=16 13/16", T=.635".



## FUNK 3B

Russ McKinnon's *Funk 3B* features the shaft of a 5B, with a beefed-up neck and short taper for superb balance and strength. The high impact, barrel shaped tip produces bright, articulate cymbal sounds—making his signature high-hat licks really speak! Ideal for funk, rock and fusion playing. L=16 1/8", T=.600".

## JAM MASTER

David Garibaldi's *Jam Master*—with its extra long taper and barrel tip—are the perfect complement to David's legendary grooves. This stick lets you play "out in front" of the hand without added top-end weight. Fast, with great cymbal and rimshot response. L=16 7/16", T=.560".



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### New Finishes And Bearing Edge for Galaxy Snare Drum



Drum Heaven has introduced their *Monarch* bearing edge, a new option for the company's *Galaxy* snare drum. The *Galaxy*'s typical bearing edge is set at a linear 45° angle, but the *Monarch* was designed with a more gradual slope to give it a distinctive sound. Drum Heaven president Jon Cohan says he initially modeled the bearing edge after those used on the solid-wood-shell drums of the 1930's, then used a trial-and-error process to fine-tune the angle in order to achieve the exact sound he sought. The resulting sound is "fatter and warmer," according to Cohan. "Because our shell is 5/8" thick," he continues, "the drumhead has more edge to sit on, and you hear more wood when the drum is struck, so it's particularly suitable for orchestral percussionists."

Drum Heaven has also announced several new finishes for the *Galaxy* snare—Emerald Sunburst Lacquer, Cherry Sunburst, and Blue Duco. **Drum Heaven, P.O. Box 1831, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130, (617) 522-3381.**

### Xepoleas Studies Now Incorporate Audio

CPP Media has just released the revised version of *Studies For The Contemporary Drummer* by John Xepoleas. It includes a new play-along CD or cassette on which many of the musical examples are performed with a group. The student can listen to the entire group playing together, hear just the drums, or just bass, guitar, and keys. The book also features many new and revised musical examples. **CCP Media, 15800 N.W. 48th Ave., Miami, FL 33014.**

### New From Rhythm Tech

Rhythm Tech has recently announced several new American-made percussion products. The company's *Hat Trick* hi-hat tambourine now features a smaller diameter, providing drummers with more

playing room on the top of their hi-hat. The *Hat Trick* is also now available with either single or double rows of jingles, in either nickel (for a "cutting sound") or brass (for a "darker" sound).

Rhythm Tech's *Studio Bar Chimes* were designed as an accessory for drummers and percussionists with limited kit space. They're available in two models—a single-row, ten-bar version with single pitch steps, and a double-row, twenty-bar version with two bars per pitch step. *Studio Bar Chimes* are made from hardened aluminum bars and have a *Rock Lock* mount so they'll fit easily on a *DSM Universal* mount or a *DSM Quad* mount.

The company has also introduced their *Piccolo iT* replacement drum lug bolts. *Piccolo iTs* are available in four or six packs and can be used for piccolo snares or drums with lugs that are closer to the rim.

Finally, Rhythm Tech's *Piccolo Active Snare* for 13" snare drums, as well as replacement wires for the system, are now available. **Rhythm Tech, 511 Center Ave., Mamaroneck, NY 10543, (800) 726-2279.**

### Slingerland Offers RIMS

Slingerland is now offering PureCussion's RIMS tom suspension system as a factory-installed option. **PureCussion, Inc., 3611 Wooddale Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55416, tel: (612) 927-2330, fax: (612) 927-2333.**

### Yamaha White Marching Tom Guard

Yamaha's Band & Orchestral Division has recently added a new white tom guard to its line of marching percussion accessories. The hard plastic design protects toms from scratches and abrasions and is available in a fifteen-foot roll. **Yamaha Corporation Of America, Band & Orchestral Division, 3445 East Paris Ave. S.E., P.O. Box 899, Grand Rapids, MI 49512-0899, (616) 940-4900.**

### New Pantera and Dream Theater Videos

The A\*Vision wing of the Atlantic Group has recently released videos featuring two of today's hottest up-and-coming drummers—Mike Portnoy of Dream Theater and Vinnie Paul of Pantera. *Images And Words—Live In Tokyo* is Dream Theater's first long-form video and features live performance, tour footage, video clips, and interviews. *Vulgar Video* features concert and behind-the-scenes footage from Pantera's *Monsters Of Rock* show in Moscow as well as video clips, personal interviews, and the band's own tour footage filmed on the road over the last two years. **A\*Vision, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10019, tel: (212) 275-2986, fax: (212) 765-0899.**

## Drum Shoe



The *Drum Shoe*, from R.K.G. Enterprises, is designed to reduce forward motion of drums and stands and protect bass drums from scratches and dents. Made from a thin piece of soft rubber measuring three feet

by six inches, the *Drum Shoe* is said to create suction on the floor as pedals gently dig into it. In addition, its small size makes it more portable than drum rugs. **R.K.G. Enterprises, P.O. Box 20523, Columbus, OH 43220-0523.**

## New UDU Products

UDU now includes the *Tambuta* drum in their line of *Claytone* Nigerian-style pot drums. The company has also recently come out with a line of *SoftPaw* stands, cases, videos, manuals, and tapes. **UDU Drum, Rt. 67, Box 126, Freehold, NY 12431, tel: (518) 634-2559, (800) UDU-DRUM, fax: (518) 634-2488.**

## Walkabout Portable Electronic Drum Device

Walkabout Percussion Systems offers their *Walkabout* mobile/wireless MIDI percussion system. According to the makers, the *Walkabout* is a hybrid of a marching percussion carrier and a MIDI percussion multi-pad housing. The unit is battery-powered, weighs thirty-five pounds, and features sensors mounted in a pair of "triggershoes" that allow users to trigger rhythms with their feet. **Walkabout Percussion Systems, P.O. Box 66058, Los Angeles, CA 90058, (310) 306-2701.**

## New Atlas/Soundolier Mic' Stands And Catalog

Atlas has recently introduced two new microphone stands to their *Performer* series, the *SB-11 WE* boom, recommended for stage miking of drums and percussion, and the *TL43BBE* tripod/boom. These and other Atlas stands are illustrated in the company's new twelve-page catalog, which provides recommended miking applications for each model, detailed product descriptions, and Atlas/Soundolier's new stability index rating to help musicians

and other performers select which stands will best meet their specific needs. **Atlas/Soundolier, Atapco Security & Communications Group, 1859 Intertech Drive, Fenton, MO 63026, (800) 876-7337.**

## More Zildjian Z Custom Additions And CD Giveaway

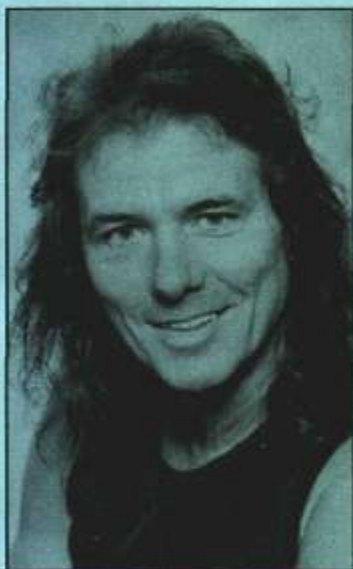


Soon after adding several medium and rock crash models to their *Z Custom* line, Zildjian has come out with more new models. The latest additions are 20" and 22" rides, 18" and 22" Chinas, and 13" and 14" hi-hats. The rides are said to fall between Zildjian *A Rock* rides and regular *Z series Light Power* rides. The new Chinas were designed to be "loud, trashy, and durable," and the hi-hats provide "a wash of sound when played loosely and a closed stick sound capable of cutting through loud bands."

Zildjian has also recently released a limited-edition compilation CD containing twelve tracks by top artists featuring Zildjian endorsers. While stocks last, the company will be giving the CD away free with purchases of Zildjian cast cymbals totaling \$100 or more. Drummers featured on the CD are Vinnie Colaiuta, Dennis Chambers, Dave Weckl, Steve Smith, Tony Williams, Alex Acuna, Will Calhoun, Jason Bonham, Paul Geary, Gregg Bissonette, Fish, and Aaron Comess. The CD was designed to demonstrate the sound of Zildjian cymbals in live and studio settings. An accompanying booklet details the cymbal setups of the artists included. Consumers must use a special coupon, available from Zildjian dealers, to receive the CD. **Avedis Zildjian Company, 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA 02061, tel: (617) 871-2200, fax: (617) 871-3984.**



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# EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DRUMSTICKS

## Chapter One: The History & Future Of The Modern Drumstick

### A HISTORY OF PROGRESS

The history of the modern drumstick was forever changed in 1957 when a drummer named Joe Calato began experimenting with different materials to improve the consistency and durability of his drumsticks. Joe's commitment to improving the design, manufacture and variety of drumsticks resulted in the creation Calato Manufacturing, one of the first American companies to specialize in making drumsticks, and his skill and talent quickly made a Calato a world leader in the drumstick business.

For drummers in the late 1950's most popular forms of music required keeping time on the ride cymbal. This style of playing quickly wore down the wooden tips on conventional sticks so Joe developed the world's first nylon tip, the Regal Tip, which immediately solved the problem and, at the same time, allowed greater articulation and a brighter ride cymbal sound that was well-suited to the music of the period.

Joe further realized that additional improvements could be made to other drumstick performance factors such as sound, response, strength and control. For instance, by examining the role that the taper and neck have in determining the feel and sensitivity of the stick, Joe found that increasing the distance of the taper and reducing the thickness of the neck created a faster, more responsive stick. This design can be seen in the Regal Tip 7A, Combo, Jazz, and 5A models; all of which are very quick, sensitive sticks built for fast, light, technical playing situations.

As time progressed, however, popular music became more diverse and changed from acoustic to electric with

drummers' responsibilities expanding to include power, endurance and showmanship. Once again, Calato was on hand to provide players with the sticks they needed to keep pace with these changes.

### RECENT TRENDS

During the 70's and 80's, as heavier playing styles became more and more prominent, darker, deeper drum and cymbal sounds along with louder, stronger sticks became desirable. To meet these new, more rigorous drumming demands, new shapes and sizes of both wood and nylon tip drumsticks such as the Regal Rock, Power Rock, 3B, 5B, 7B and Quantum Series with midrange tapers and larger bodies, necks and tips were designed.

Most recently, as jazz, latin, rock, country and world music influences have converged, drumming styles have changed again. To maximize the performance of today's piccolo snare drums, shorter, smaller tom-toms and thinner, more controlled cymbals, sticks like the 8A, 9A and Noble & Cooley models have been developed. These sticks combine new nylon and wood tip styles with tapers, necks and bodies that support the contemporary drummer's need for a balance of durability, power, articulation and control.

Also, increased emphasis on sound quality and color during the current period has broadened the use and popularity of specialty sticks and brushes.

been made of top-grade, hand-selected American hickory; the most perfect drumstick material in terms of durability, weight, consistency, balance, response and feel. Calato's hickory is grown, harvested, preselected and processed using several exclusive methods including one-of-a-kind production machinery and a curing system that removes the right amount of moisture from the wood to prevent warpage without inducing brittleness.

Then, to ensure the quality of every Regal and Regal Tip drumstick, each stick is rolled for straightness, inspected for flaws, electronically weighed, packaged in prematched pairs and shipped to your local drum shop.

This dedication to quality and innovation is why, regardless of the changes in music and drumming, for more than 35 years the leaders of every generation of drummers have chosen to play Calato drumsticks exclusively- drummers from Jake Hanna, Pete Magadini, Ed Thigpen, Dennis Chambers, Jim Keltner, Sonny Emory and Chester Thompson to Lars Ulrich, Alex Van Halen, Michael Baker, John Stanier and Josh Freese.

And, because the evolution of drumsticks remains so closely linked to the evolution of drumming, 3 generations of the Calato family remain committed to improving, refining and updating their sticks to meet drumming's ever-changing demands. Perhaps that's why Joe Calato, the inventor of the original nylon tip drumstick and founder of Calato Manufacturing, simply states, "The history of Regal Tip is the future of drumsticks."

### DRUMSTICKS OF THE FUTURE

Of course one thing that hasn't changed over the years is the fact that Regal and Regal Tip sticks have always

*Coming next month: Chapter Two  
"The Anatomy Of A Drumstick"*



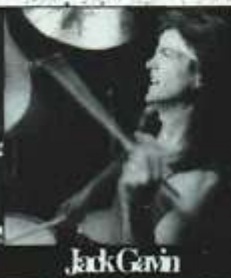
Lars Ulrich



Gary Novak



Dennis Chambers



Jack Gavin



Josh Freese



Sonny Emory

## Regal Tip by Calato

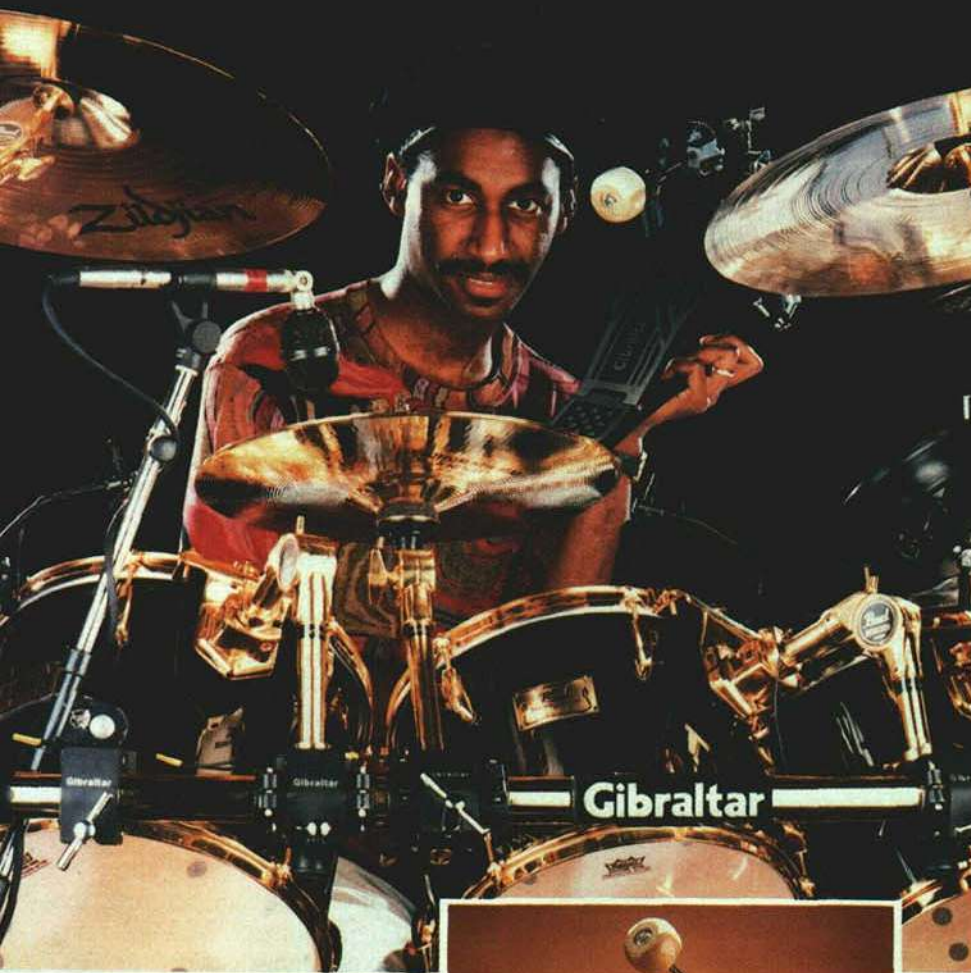
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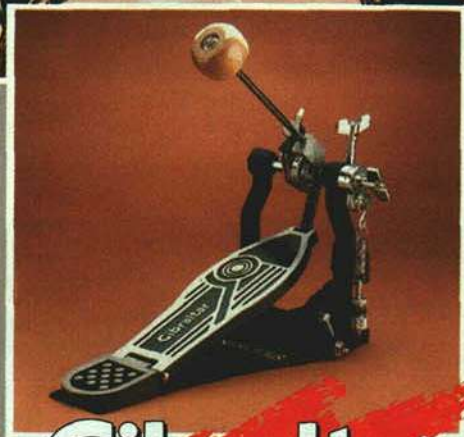


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See the complete line of 7500, 9500 and Intruder Series pedals at your Gibraltar dealer.



# Gibraltar

H A R D W A R E

## IT'S QUESTIONABLE

continued from page 16

the hands or whoever is responsible for the consideration of new employees.) If you meet a need that they have, they'll get in touch with you. From there, it's up to you to land the job, and then make something of it for yourself. Good luck!

## Rogers Drums And Slingerland Timbales

**Q** I have a set of Rogers drums with gold sparkle finish on the bass and snare drum. The snare drum has a tag with the serial number 14609. (The tag also reads: "Holiday Model, Cleveland, Ohio—established 1849.") I also have a set of what appear to be brass timbales with genuine skin heads. The heads are marked "Slingerland—Tito Puente."

I would appreciate your help in finding out the date of manufacture as well as knowing if they are collectors' items. The brass timbales are heavily tarnished and I would welcome your advice on restoring their natural beauty.

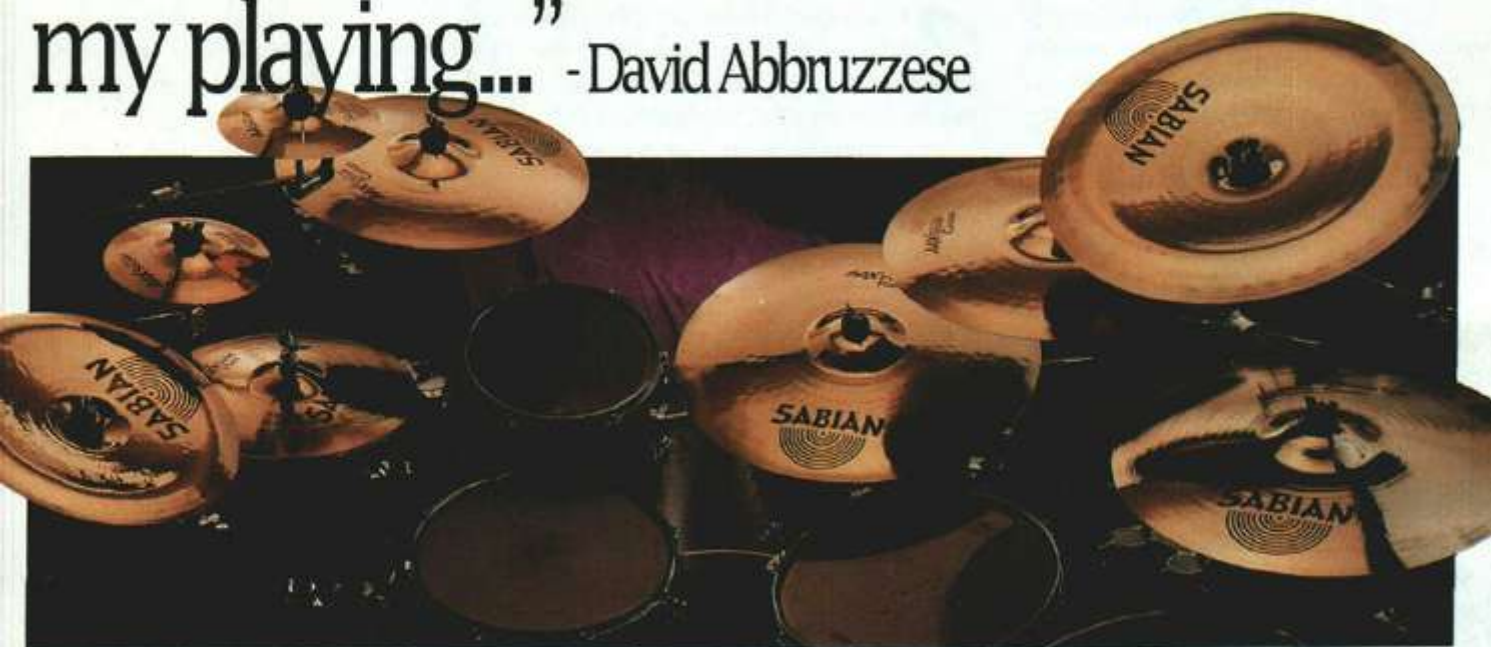
Chris Reznak  
Wynnewood PA

**A** According to *Collectors' Corner* author Harry Cangany, "Rogers drums were complete works of art once the company designed the beavertail lug and put it into production in 1963. Before that time, the lugs were very fragile. From the time Cleveland-based Grossman Music bought the company from the Rogers family (in 1953) until they sold it to CBS (in 1966), Rogers drums went through constant upgrading.

"No drums were ever made in Cleveland. Before CBS moved the factory to Fullerton, California, Rogers drums were made in Covington, Ohio, near Dayton. Grossman built the factory on the farm of their engineer/inventor, Joe Thompson. The drums were 'warehoused' in Cleveland when Grossman owned the company, and then in Dayton by CBS before the move to California. That will explain the sticker inside the snare drum.

"If your lugs are beavertails, the set should be from 1963 to '66. If the lugs are drawn brass (bread and butter) and *Swiv-O-Matic* holders are present, look to 1959

"Having SABIANs on both sides of my setup has really opened up my playing..." - David Abbruzzese



"SABIAN cymbals are a huge part of my sound. Pearl Jam music is really rhythmic, so rather than play a lot of drum fills, I splash and crash lots of accents or play heavy on my Ride and Chinese cymbal to tie everything together. I really like the contrasts I get by mixing up the small Splashes and 14" AAX Mini Chinese with the bigger Crashes and AA Chinese. That mix of small and big is really dynamic.

The 20" AA Chinese is a total contrast to everything else. It's so raw... like a guitar in over-drive. Just hit it - there's a real change of

focus. It's great for riding, or crashing to start or finish a fill.

You can see that I've got the 8" AA and AAX Splashes and Mini Chinese by my Hi-Hat. Having cymbals on both sides of my setup has really opened up my playing... I'm doing lots of two-handed cymbal patterns and fills, like rolling from the snare to the Hi-Hat and up to the Splashes. Or nailing the Mini Chinese and the snare at the same time... what a great sound."

For more info on SABIAN cymbals and the setups of leading drummers, see your SABIAN dealer or contact us directly for your free copy of this year's SABIAN NewsBeat Catalog.



- A 14" AAX Mini Chinese
- B 8" AAX Splash
- C 8" AA Splash
- D 13" AAX Fusion Hats (AAX Fusion Bottom, AAX Stage Top)
- E 17" AAX Stage Crash
- F 20" AAX Metal Ride
- G 18" AAX Stage Crash
- H 20" AA Chinese
- I 19" AA Medium Thin Crash

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to '64. With drum companies, there is *always* an overlap of years, because parts were used until they were exhausted. Rogers drums are very collectible, and the Cleveland-stickered drums (pre-CBS) are the most sought after.

"The Slingerland *Tito Puente* timbales were featured from at least 1961 through 1971. They were made of spun brass. There is no mention of lacquer over the brass—although Slingerland did put lacquer on the other timbale models they made. Cymbal cleaner can clean brass. If the timbales are lacquered, remove the lacquer with lacquer thinner, then shine the brass and re-lacquer the drums. Be careful with the heads; they were tucked around the steel hoops. Timbales such as yours are probably worth about \$150."

## Platinum Cymbals

**Q** How do you safely clean Zildjian *Platinum* cymbals? After several years, the fingerprints, dust, and buildup of general gunk alters that original silver shine they have when new—which I would

like back. I have been advised many times that it's not a good idea to use conventional cymbal cleaners on these types of cymbals.

Matt May  
San Luis Obispo CA

**Q** I own over a dozen Zildjian cymbals—all purchased long before the company's *Platinum* finish was available. They are in every other way great cymbals, but I am impressed when I see a drummer under lights with clean and polished *Platinums*. Is there any way I can have such a finish applied to my old reliables?

Joseph Martinez  
Pheonixille PA

**A** Zildjian product specialist John King replies: "The *Platinum* finish is a unique electro-plating process developed after much experimentation by our R&D staff. Unfortunately, only new cymbals processed specifically for the *Platinum* finish may be used. This prevents us from offering any custom *Platinum* cymbal refinishing.

"To properly clean *Platinum* cymbals, it

is necessary to know that there is an extremely thin but very durable coating of polyurethane applied to all of the cymbals to prevent tarnishing and fingerprinting. (This is also true of our regular-finish A and K lines.) We advise that this coating be maintained for as long as possible, and that it be cleaned with simple soap and water. (Ammonia-based cleaners and sprays should be avoided.)

"When the polyurethane starts to wear away after extended use, it will be necessary to remove all of the residual coating in order to continue to clean the cymbal evenly. Several applications of cymbal cleaner might be required in order to accomplish this. We recommend the use of our Zildjian cymbal cleaner because it uses a chemical action against the dirt and coating rather than an abrasive action (as found in many conventional cymbal cleaners). Once the original *Platinum* finish is fully exposed, it can easily be cleaned with cymbal polish to maintain its high luster."



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Sound information from inside the source

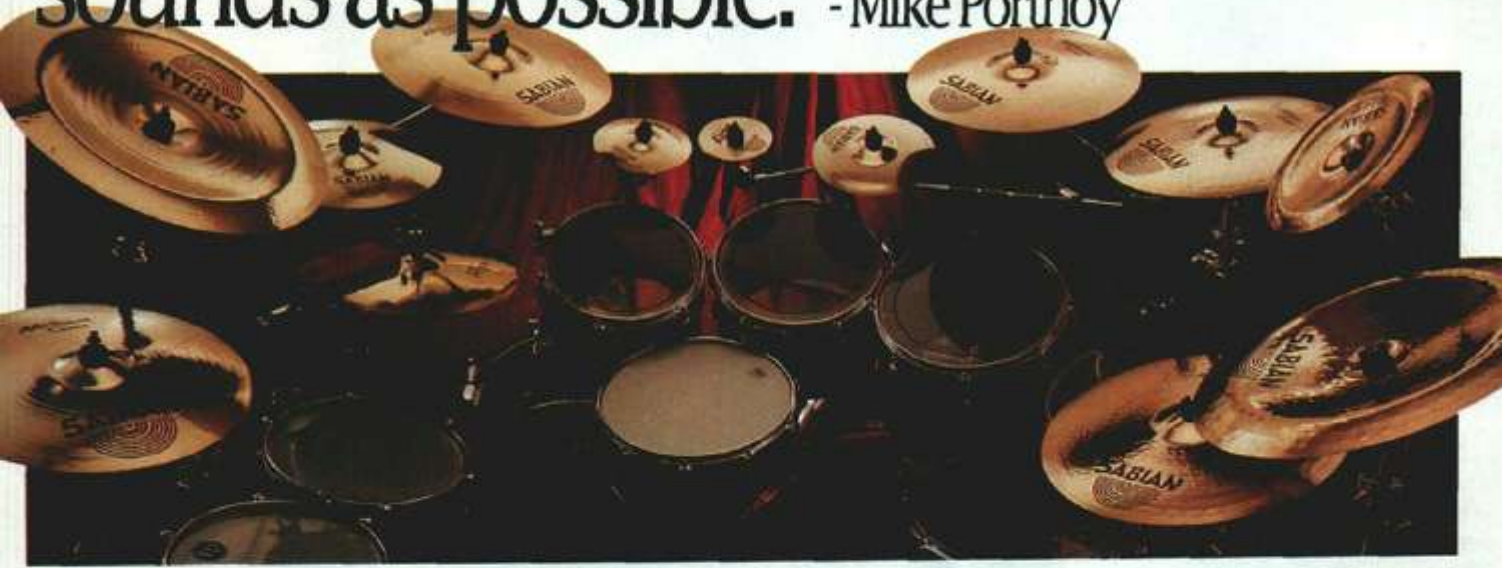
The May Microphone System is a product of Randall May International, 7712-B Talbert Ave., Huntington Beach, Ca. 92648. Telephone 714/543-1828



Tommy uses the May AKG D112R/F (shown here) and AKG D112 BD



"I'm playing a big mix of AA, AAX, HH and B8 Pro, so I can control as many sounds as possible." - Mike Portnoy



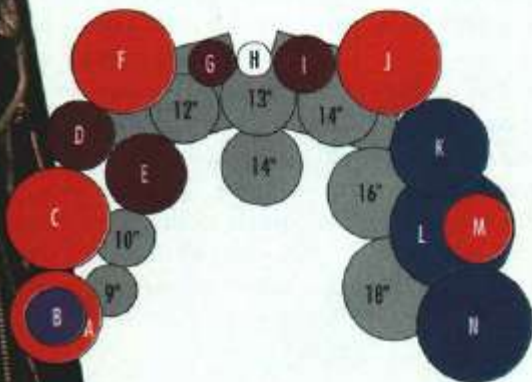
"I'm into technique. But with Dream Theater, we get into some pretty big musical concepts, so my sounds are as important as how I play them. I'm playing a big mix of SABIANs, so I can control as many sounds as possible.

There are higher pitched AA and AAX models with lower sounding HH... I've got three small AAX Splashes and a 10" B8 Pro China Splash with bigger AA and HH Crashes. There are three Chinese:

a small and fast 12" AA Mini Chinese, an 18" AA and this great, trashy sounding 20" HH Thin.

It's a matter of perspective. Like a guitarist or keyboard player, I'm into all the melodic and effects options I need to play the music. And I surround myself with cymbals so I can access them with either or both hands. That in itself opens up a lot of playing and sound combination possibilities."

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- B 10" B8 Pro China Splash
- C 18" AA Chinese
- D 12" AAX Splash
- E 14" AAX Stage HH Hats
- F 18" AA Medium Thin Crash
- G 8" AAX Splash
- H 6" CD Cymbal Disc
- I 10" AAX Splash
- J 18" AA Medium Crash
- K 17" HH Thin Crash
- L 22" HH Rock Ride
- M 12" AA Mini Chinese
- N 20" HH Thin Chinese

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# The William S. Hart Snare Drum

by Harry Cangany

William S. Hart may not enjoy widespread recognition now, but there was a time when the mere mention of his name would bring raucous squeals from children and admiration from his adult fans. Hart was one of the best-known silent movie stars, and except for Tom Mix, was the biggest name in Hollywood westerns.

For about fifteen years, the grim-faced actor played the lead in countless sagebrush thrillers. Hart, on his pony named Fritz, was often typecast as the redeemable bad man, saved by the love of a good woman.

Bill Hart's popularity coincided with the rise of Ludwig & Ludwig. Somewhere around the mid-1920s Hart bought the pictured snare drum for his son. This was not just any snare drum, though—it was gold-plated, and was the most expensive model Ludwig had to offer. The finish was known as the *Triumphant* model, and unlike the *Black Beauties* and *Leedy Elites*—which featured an imitation gold plating—this was the real thing: gold shell and gold rims. Ludwig had a slightly less expensive model called the *Inspirational*—an unengraved *Black Beauty* with gold-plated hoops, lugs, and strainer.

Not only is the *Hart* drum gold-plated, it is also engraved, and the engraving covers the entire shell and hoops. The clips used to hold the drum rods are also gold-plated, and so are the rods. The drum is also hand-burnished. When the light catches this instrument, it is easy to understand the fascination with gold. I hope the photo gives you an idea of its majesty.

Like the *Black Beauty*, the *Hart* drum started as a spun-brass shell. The 4x14 size was considered perfect for dance work or for young people. I have not been able to find out about any Hart children, but Bill Hart would have been in his fifties when this drum was built. The story handed down by Bill Ludwig, Jr. states that the drum was for Hart's son, so I'll accept it.

In the conference room at the old Ludwig factory on Damen Avenue in Chicago, the Ludwigs displayed their fantastic collec-



tion. Every drum had a black plate that told its history. Each plate was in a desk-style holder usually reserved for a person's name. When I got the Hart snare, Bill Ludwig, Jr. was kind enough to include the sign used for it in the display.

If we assume that the Hart snare was made in 1925, it would have cost about \$120. That doesn't seem like a lot of money today, when \$120 will only buy a good used snare drum. But if you apply a 6% interest factor for inflation and price increases, that \$120 becomes almost \$6,000—an overwhelming figure that makes new top-of-the-line models seem like bargains. No wonder it took a millionaire to buy this one!

There is a mystery surrounding the Hart drum, and perhaps a sharp-eyed reader can give us the solution. I asked Bill Ludwig, Jr. why he had it. He didn't know. I can't believe that either Hart or his son could have been dissatisfied with it, and manufacturers usually don't buy back merchandise. The answer to this riddle seems to have been taken with William S. Hart and William F. Ludwig to the big ranch house in the sky. I bet it's gold plated, too.



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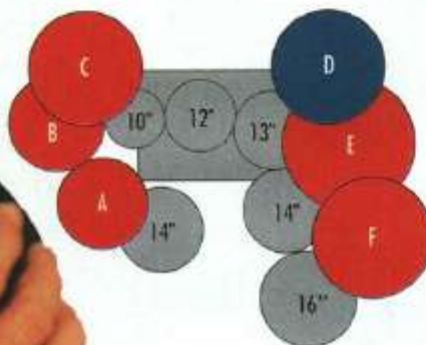
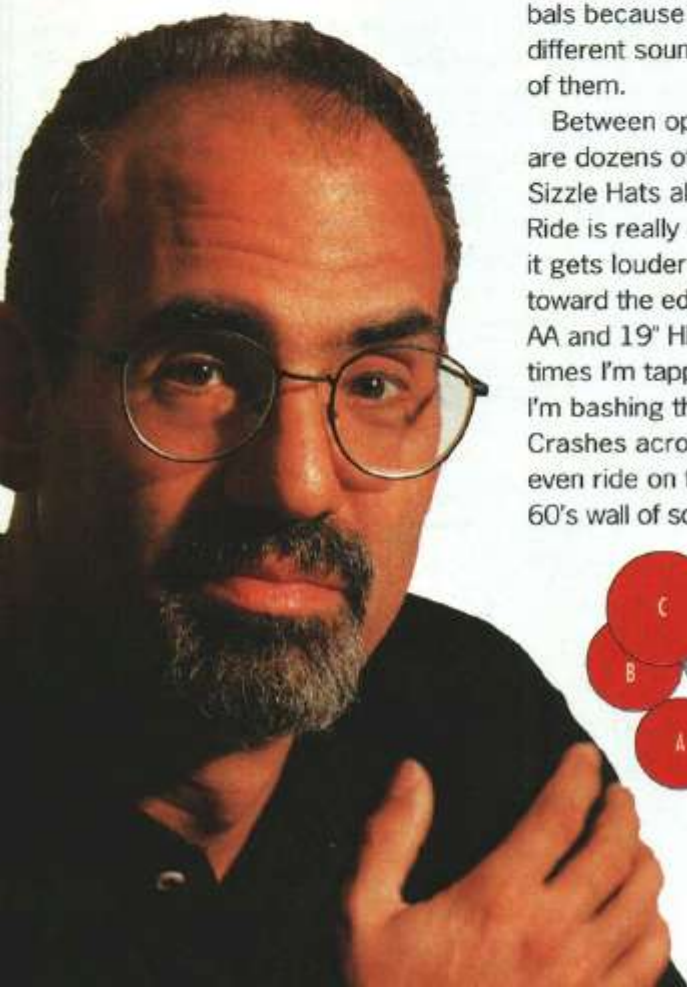


"I could use a hundred cymbals to get all the sounds I need to play Billy's music... he covers so many different styles. But I stick with the same cymbals because I can pull so many different sounds out of every one of them.

Between open and closed, there are dozens of sounds in the 15" AA Sizzle Hats alone. My 22" AA Rock Ride is really cutting on the bell, but it gets louder and really opens up toward the edge. And the 16" and 19" AA and 19" HH Crashes... sometimes I'm tapping their bells, then I'm bashing the HH and AA Rock Crashes across their edges. I even ride on them for that great 60's wall of sound.

You've got to play the dynamics all over the cymbal: from soft to loud, work with the volumes. Sure, there are only a few cymbals in my setup, but there are hundreds of sounds. Hey, believe me, with Billy Joel, I need as many sounds as I can get."

For more info on SABIAN cymbals and the setups of leading drummers, see your SABIAN dealer or contact us directly for your free copy of this year's SABIAN NewsBeat Catalog.



- A 15" AA Sizzle Hats
- B 16" AA Medium Thin Crash
- C 19" AA Rock Crash
- D 22" HH Rock Crash
- E 19" HH Rock Crash
- F 20" AA Crash/Ride

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# Four On The Floor

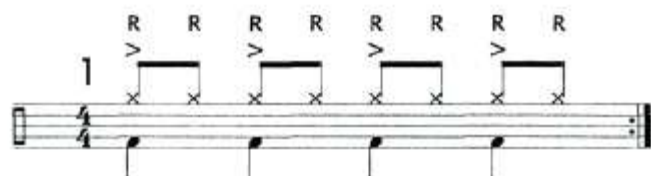


by Rod Morgenstein

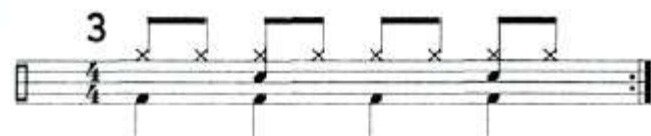


"Four on the floor" is a catch-phrase for a technique that involves playing the bass drum on all four quarter notes of a measure. This technique, which has traditionally been very effective in driving big bands and Dixieland bands, can also work extremely well in more contemporary styles of music like rock, jazz-rock, and fusion.

Let's begin with the bass drum and hi-hat. Except where noted, play the hi-hat with the right hand (or your main hi-hat hand) and accent the downbeat of each quarter note.



Example 3 adds the snare on beats 2 and 4.



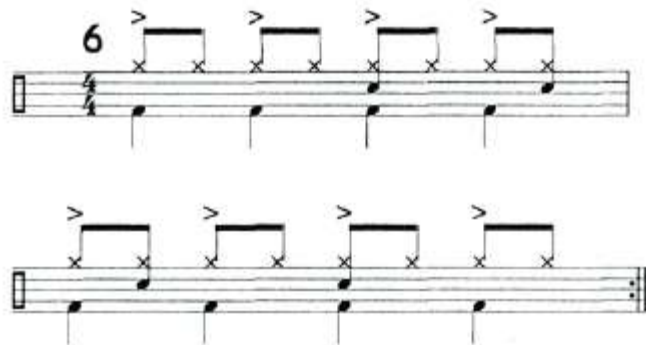
Example 4 introduces a basic syncopated snare drum rhythm. As simple as the bass drum pattern may seem, it can be awkward keeping it in sync with the hands simply because we don't play the bass drum in this manner very often.



Example 5 is a half-time feel.



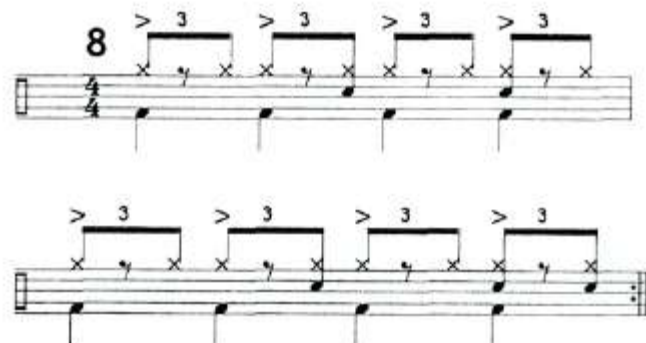
Example 6 adds a little extra to the snare part.



Now let's try a shuffle feel.



Vary the snare part and don't forget to lock in the bass drum with the accented downbeat on the hi-hat. Examples 8, 9, and 10 are half-time shuffles. Examples 11-14 begin to explore the possibilities of playing on top of "four on the floor" by being creative with the hi-hat and snare. Examples 11 and 12 add 16th notes to the hi-hat as well as open and closed effects. Examples 13 and 14 vary the hi-hat shuffle pattern by syncopating it and playing constant triplets.



10

3 3 3 3

3 3 3 3

11

R L

R L

12

R L

13

3 3 3 3

R L R L R L R L

14

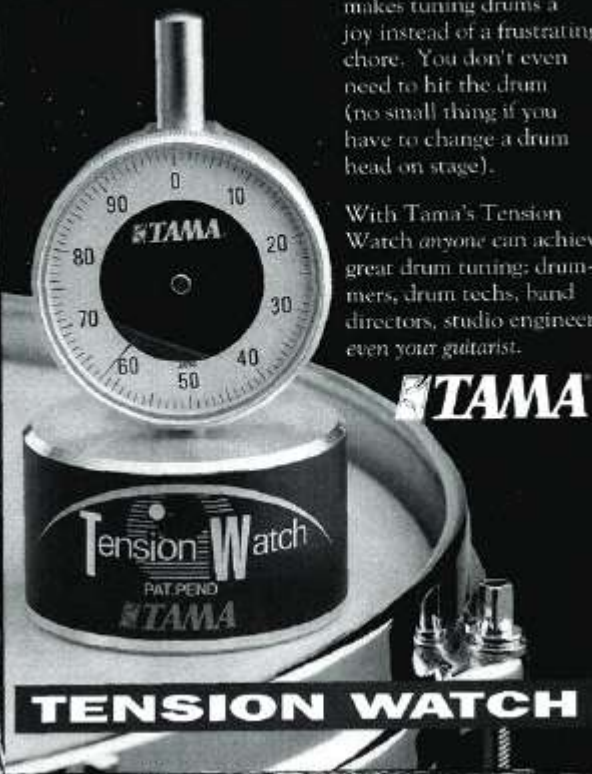
3 3 3 3

R R R L R L

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## TOMMY LEE

continued from page 25

over the years. You started out with Sonor, then you moved to Pearl, and now you play Drum Workshop. Why all the switching around?

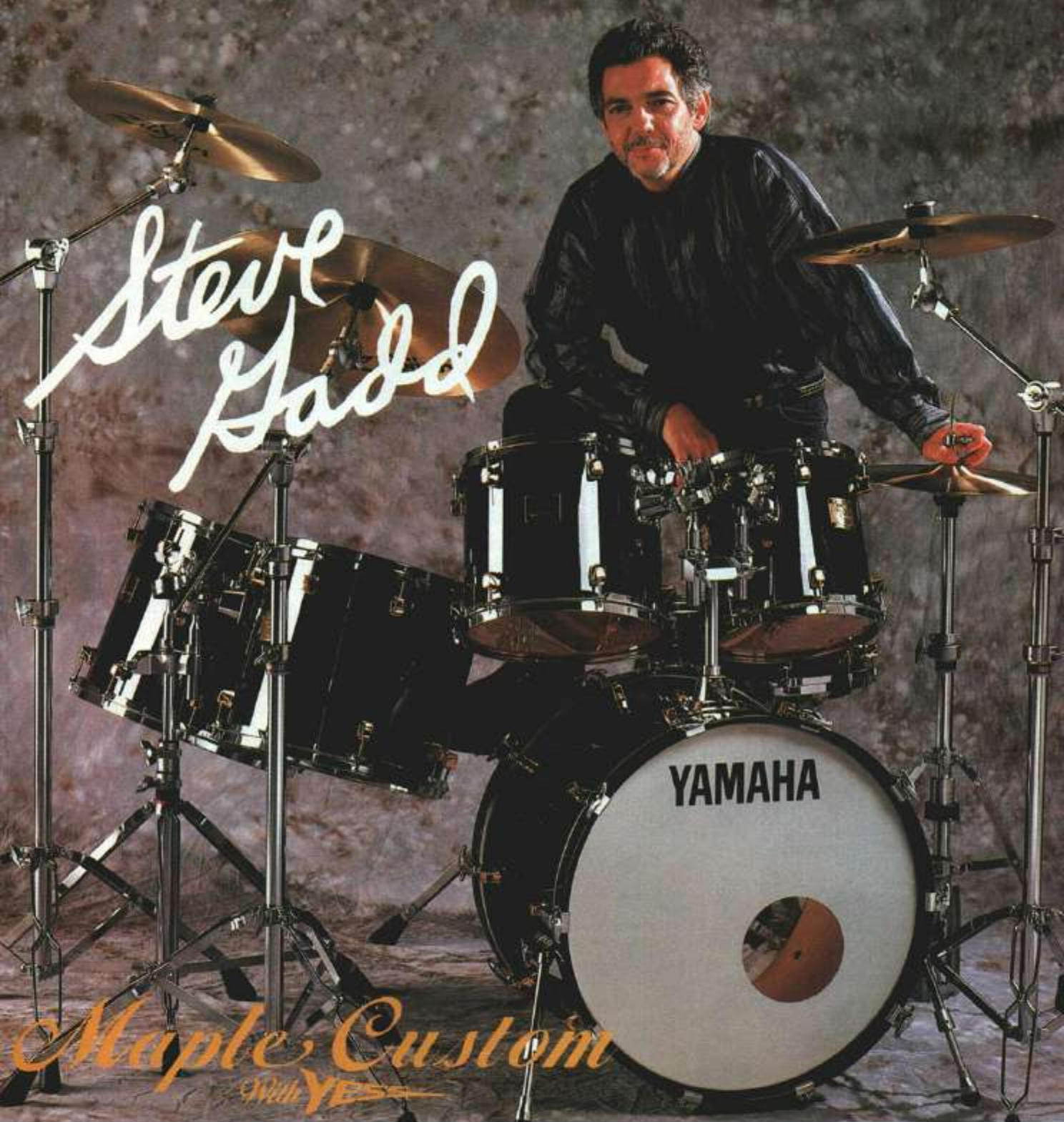
**TL:** Without bashing the other drum companies, I just found some of the craftsmanship lacking. I got drums that were out of round; the heads wouldn't fit. And I'd notice it when I'd be tuning a drum for half an hour and not getting anywhere because the shell was messed up. It was all bogus, and I'm not into playing bogus drums. Who is, right?

The guys from DW don't pay me any money. They give me the kits to play, and the kits are amazing! I went down to their warehouse and hand-picked the shells, timbre-matching them, listening to the tones and picking out note-for-note what my kit was going to sound like. I thought, This is the company I want to work with! They're innovative and I appreciate that.

**MP:** You told me you're using different sticks. I remember seeing you play live with these huge, thick sticks, but I would think you'd need something you can get a bit more finesse out of in the studio.

**TL:** I play just as hard whether it's live or in the studio. But it had been a drag because my sticks would always snap on me. And even if you're quick on the draw and get a replacement stick, you're still going to miss a beat somewhere. And that especially sucks in the studio. That's why there's something to be said about these new sticks called *Ahead*, made by Easton, the softball bat company. They're aluminum sticks with a plastic shaft and a tip that screws and locks on. They hit the drums a lot harder but they just don't break—at least not nearly as often as wood. I compared them with wood sticks on the bell of the ride and crackin' the snare, and I really couldn't tell the difference in the sound, except maybe that the Easton sticks are a bit brighter.

They also have a shock-vibration dampener inside the stick, which is great for me because I've had carpal tunnel syndrome, where the nerves from your wrist to your fingers get choked and you lose feeling. I've done shows with sticks literally taped to my hands because I couldn't feel them. I haven't toured with the new sticks yet, but



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I can already feel the difference.

**MP:** What prompted you to go to a single kick drum for the *Dr. Feelgood* tour?

**TL:** I don't want to sound like a jerk here, but it was one of those things where I felt a lot of people who were single-bass drummers had gone and copied my double-bass setup, to where I saw a lot of guys with setups that looked a lot like or exactly like mine. I never wanted to be like anyone else, obviously, so I decided to switch my kit all together. I think I also switched partly out of boredom.

I'm always changing things around, looking for something new to chew on. And I enjoyed the single kick for a while, but now I'm going back to my old setup because that's what I feel comfortable playing. I had been using two 24" kicks, but with the single-kick kit it was a 26" in the studio and 28" live, and they were harder to play. I worked twice as hard to get the quick doubles or triples out of the big drum than I did with the 24s. But I loved the big sound I got out of them, man; I miss that!

**MP:** But your kick drums have always sounded very punchy despite their size. How do you go about getting a lot of attack with big drums?

**TL:** I use wood beaters, which help. And I've found that shredded newspaper makes a great dampening material inside the drum. It moves away when you kick the drum, but it bounces back real nice and lays against the heads to stop any overring. Pillows are so dense, they suck the sound out of the drum. But air passes through the paper and lets the drum keep all its resonance.

**MP:** You've also been a very visible drummer in a very image-conscious band. Is it still important for you for the drumming public, or the rock public, to perceive you in a certain light?

**TL:** Really, I'm not that big on image. I'm just into playing music and playing drums. The only thing that's real important to me, from a visual standpoint, is the shock value and the entertainment value I can bring to a show. I think back to when I went to shows a lot and I'd look at the drummer and ask myself, "Are people getting off on what he's doing?" or "Is the drum solo so bizarre or out of control that it's something you shouldn't miss?" I figure that if those things aren't there, the people can stay

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When you go to a concert and pay \$20 or \$30 for a ticket, you want to see thrills,

chills, and spills. I want to give people something they can't see on MTV or hear on the record. I like pulling off stuff that'll

make people at the show—not just drummers—go off and tell their friends, "Man, you should have seen Tommy!"

**MP:** But you've done so much already. First you tilted 90° forward, then you did complete forward and backward rolls, and then you went out over the crowd on the *Feelgood* tour. How do you top that?

**TL:** Well, that's the big challenge, and I've been tormenting myself trying to come up with something. I have a couple of ideas, but they're all insurance nightmares! Whatever I do will cost a fortune, and a lot of stuff needs to fall into place to make it happen. What I'll probably end up doing is using video images that match the sound of what I'm bringing across. Like when I play the kick drum, you'll see a cannon. Or if I do a snare roll, you'll see a machine gun fire.

Also, there's been so much stuff going on during my solos in the past that this time I'd like to concentrate more on what I'm playing. I'd like to show people what I'm capable of doing as a *player*, and I think that's kind of been lost through the theme-park atmosphere of our shows. I tell myself that sometimes, but then I have to remind myself that I'm not just playing for drummers. These are people who want to be entertained, so it's tough to balance the two groups when I'm working on a solo.

**MP:** C'mon, you're hedging here. I know you've got something up your sleeve, but you just don't want to tell us.

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**TL:** Yeah, I'm afraid of putting my foot in my mouth. [laughs] Well, okay. You know I'm such a thrill-seeker—I love bungee-jumping and just going fast all the time. And I always want to get people involved with the solo. If I can't bring them to me, I'm gonna go out to them, which is what I did on the last tour. I took the drums out over to the worst seats in the arena, so those folks could have a memory to take home with them. I can't tell you the number of people whose eyeballs I saw just buggin' out of their heads! Nobody had done that for them before.

So you want to know what my ultimate idea is? Well, here it is: As you're looking at the stage from the audience, you have your speaker cabinets to the left, then the band, and speaker cabinets to the right. I want to have some dummy cabinets high on both sides that fold in and out, with a drumkit behind one of them. Well, the cabinets would open up and I'd blaze down on my kit out into the crowd on these roller-coaster rails. It would line the outer edge of the floor, in the shape of the oval arena.

So I'd come down and go towards the back, do a loop, circle around the back of

the place, go back up and do a bank turn so now I'm facing the stage. Basically, it would be an indoor roller-coaster! We'd have to have plexiglass between me and the crowd and there's gotta be fire exits. It's gonna cost a fortune, and that's even if we can logistically pull it off.

I'd like to mount a couple of video cameras on there so people can watch the screens when they can't see me and feel what it's like in the loop! Whatever I end up doing, I want to blow people's minds!

**MP:** You mentioned that it's important for you now, though, for people to see your capabilities as a player. What have you done to improve your playing over the years—any lessons or self-study? And looking back on your past albums, in what areas do you think you're a better player now?

**TL:** I think I improved just through playing over the years and listening to a lot of music. I don't really play or practice much on my own, and I'm starting to get really bummed because I don't have a kit up here I can just practice on. But I'm so involved in the music and the album right now that I can't think about drums. I miss my drums a

lot, though, and I'll probably have a kit sent up here just so I can keep my chops up.

On the whole, though, I really don't practice a lot because I just don't like playing by myself all that much. I do most of that before or after band rehearsals. I'll try things I've heard in my head or work on things I've done by accident so I can pull 'em off again when I want to. If I've improved anywhere, it's just in my time and feel. I'm a freak about those things and I've put myself through hell about them. I'm really critical, especially when we're recording. The other guys might think a track sounds fine, but I'll want to do it again. I've used a click, sometimes in whole songs and sometimes just in sections.

But a click is scary; it's so restraining and it's my biggest nightmare. I'd like to think I'm solid enough to where I don't need one, but sometimes I have to use one to make a section work right, and I hate that! My producer and I go back and forth on it and, I swear, the click is going to be the death of me! [laughs]

**MP:** Are you a one-take drummer?

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**TL:** I can be. There are a couple of tracks we're doing here that were one or two takes, or maybe just an edit at the tag. I remember "Hooligans" was one take, and at the end Bob pressed the talk-back button into my headphones and said, "Man, that's the best drum track I've ever heard!" You could hear everyone in the control room just going off behind him, and it made me feel great. But Bob's a real freak for getting the "feel" on tape. I might play everything right all the way through without a slip, but he'd say the feel wasn't quite right and I'd have to play it again. I'd be pissed off, frustrated, ripping my headphones off. But Bob has a way of pulling the best out of you.

**MP:** Looking back on your past six studio records, which are you most proud of?

**TL:** I think I've liked every one we've done, in one way or another. *Shout At The Devil* was really cool because it was very heavy for its time and there's a lot of aggression. I'm proud of *Theatre Of Pain* because I wrote what I consider to be one of our classic songs. [Tommy wrote and performed the piano parts of "Home Sweet Home."] I know a lot of fans think our first record is the best one we've ever done, but

we're just so much better players now that I *can't* listen to that record.

*Girls, Girls, Girls* was a tough record for us. The band was pretty messed up with drugs and alcohol back then, and it was hard getting that record done. But there's still some pretty cool stuff on there, like "Wild Side." I'm really happy with the drumming on that song. We all went to rehab after that tour and really came back with fresh minds and a fresh attitude for *Dr. Feelgood*. It was a spiritual and mental tune-up, and I think it showed on the record and tour. We all kept our acts together.

**MP:** Assuming all the stuff with Vince hadn't happened and he was still the singer, what do you honestly think the new music would sound like?

**TL:** It wouldn't be very good; absolutely uninspired. I don't even know if there would have *been* a new record.

**MP:** How do you think your older songs will translate with your new singer?

**TL:** Well, that was a really important factor to us with whoever it was going to be. I mean, we can't just ignore those songs; people expect to hear them and we've got to play 'em. We had John sing some stuff

and he just absolutely kicked ass! He sang it stronger and with much more soul and power than they'd ever been sung before. For me, Nikki, and Mick, it was like, "What more do we need to know about this guy?" We're even thinking of re-recording a couple of them to release on B-sides of our singles, songs like "Boy City Blues" that were never done quite the way Nikki had in mind when he wrote them.

Having John in the band lets us do so many things and go in directions we were never capable of going in before. Still, we're all giving John a hard time, getting him freaked out by telling him we're going to do our first shows at festivals like "Rock In Rio," which gets 300,000 people. It's funny to see his reaction [laughs], but I'm sure he'll be great because he's just so talented. We've got a lot of confidence in him.

**MP:** I also think the new stuff will come off strong because you're much tighter as musicians. This is the first time I've ever heard the rhythm section so synched up, like you consciously worked on playing together.

**TL:** That's something we talked a lot about, even in the early writing stages.

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We'd change the way people played a part so it locked up with the kick drum, or I'd alter my drum part to match what Nikki was doing. We did some of that before, but when you do that over the course of a whole record, it really comes off powerful.

**MP:** Where did twenty-two new songs come from? You obviously can't put them all on the record.

**TL:** John had a lot of songs; Mick, Nikki, and I had a bunch of music. But when we got together, it opened up all kinds of doors and ideas—with John's voice in mind. We

won't pick out what songs are going to actually make the record until they're all completely mixed, so we can judge each one on equal terms and decide what kind of an album we want people to hear. There's a lot of variety in styles. But some songs, like "Hooligans," are just so kickin' that I'm sure we all know they're going to make the record, even though we haven't talked about it.

**MP:** Are there any new songs that you had a lot to do with the writing?

**TL:** There are songs called "Uncle Jack,"

"Dropping Like Flies," "My Way Or The Highway," and "Song With No Name" that I had something to do with the writing. But we're a very jam-oriented band, so we all have something to do with the creation of a song. One of us might bring an idea or riff in, but we all shape it. I think I do more in the arranging of parts or changing the groove to something. And we re-wrote or changed a lot of things once we got into the studio, where you have the input of the producer, too.

**MP:** Do you like the studio as much as performing for an audience?

**TL:** Strictly from a player's standpoint, I like the live arena better. But I've always liked the studio environment. I have a studio at my house and I'm always in there, creating weird noises or putting stuff down on computer. I have my drums set up in there, too, and I have a guitar and bass. I'm not good enough on the guitar to really wail, but I play enough to write music by ear. A lot of that came from piano lessons as a kid and just picking stuff up from Mick over the years.

**MP:** What are some playing situations you want to explore in the future, with or out-

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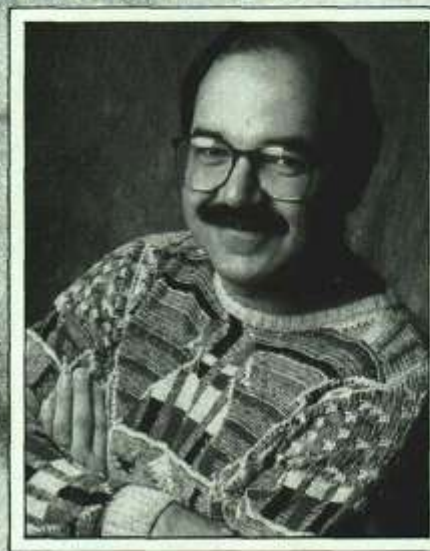
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side of Motley Crie?

**TL:** I've always enjoyed recording with other musicians. I had the chance to play with Steve Lukather, Randy Jackson, and Stu Hamm, and I learn so much just by stretching out and playing with other guys. I couldn't believe when Richard Marx asked me to come down to play on a song for his new record. It was a heavy track, but still, I didn't know what to expect. Lukather and Jackson were there—these amazing musicians who've played with some awesome drummers—and I was so nervous! But they told me they just wanted me to play drums like I do, with my attitude and power. That made me feel really good. I just ripped on it, and the track came out super! I really love those one-off studio projects or casual jams, but it's not something I'd ever make a big habit of doing. I mean, I'd never leave Crie to do that or join another band.

I love producing, too, or at least the thought of getting into it more. I produced a few tracks for Electric Love Hogs, and it whet my appetite. That's why I'm such a studio rat and I just soak up everything that Bob or anybody else does. And I believe

that one of these days, when this band eventually calls its quits, producing is where I'm going to be. I love playing the drums—don't get me wrong—and Crie could go on for another ten years the way we all feel right now. But I believe I can make a mark in producing, keeping my musical career going that way and lending my experience to other bands.

It's funny, though. I was just remembering back to when we wore the makeup and dressed up real mean, and I never would have guessed we'd last long enough to be

talking about *another* ten years! I liked what we were back then and I really enjoyed having that stage persona, like an alter ego when we went out on stage. But in the end it's the music that matters, and I think it took us a long time to really give that the priority it deserves. It's exciting to think that with all Motley Crie has accomplished, we're still trying to reach our peak musically.



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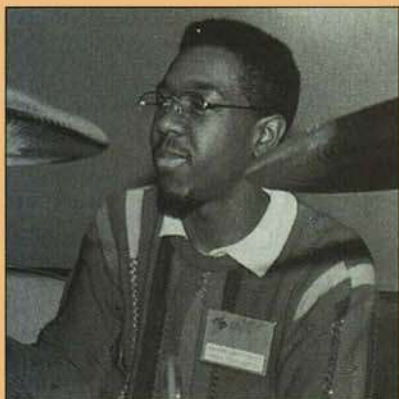
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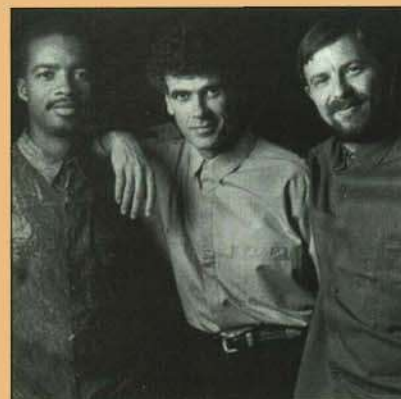


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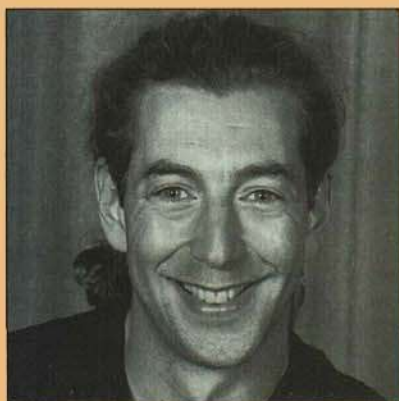
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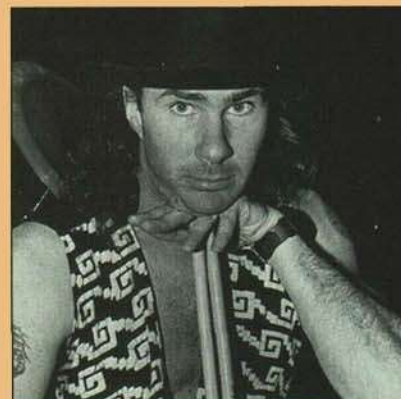
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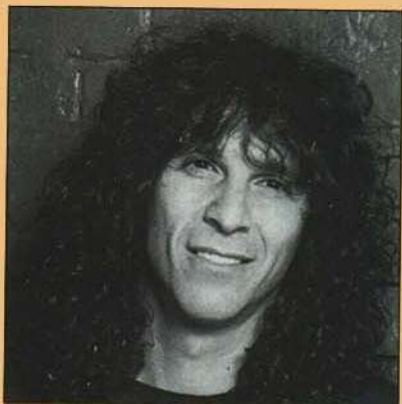
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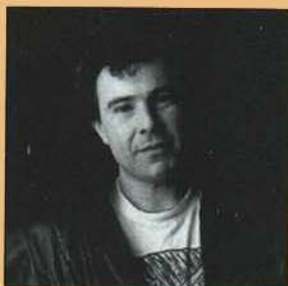
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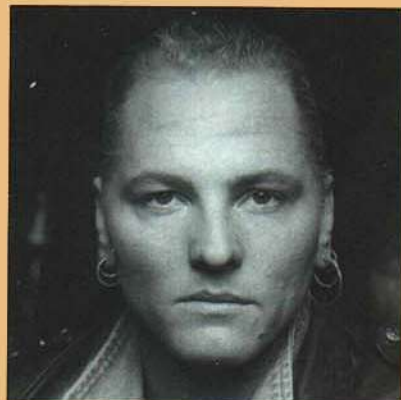
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# Robby Ameen

## Traveling The Latin-Jazz Terrain

by Teri Saccone

*Robby Ameen may not be a household name, but this topnotch New York City session drummer/percussionist gets coveted calls for everything from jingles to jazz to hip-hop. The living-room wall of Robby's midtown Manhattan apartment is decorated with a collection of exotic drums that's somewhat symbolic of Ameen's own multifarious musical leanings: hand drums and gongs from Indonesia, a coffee grinder from Syria that doubles as a percussive instrument, various Brazilian percussion instruments, an Afghan frame drum, a Moroccan square drum, a Cuban bata, and a set of Pete Engelhart sculptured instruments. Ameen isn't quite so international in his musical projects; he more or less sticks to the Western hemisphere—specializing in jazz and Afro-Cuban bands. In that vein, he's collaborated with the likes of Ruben Blades, Dave Valentin, David Byrne, Earl Klugh, Daniel Ponce, Paquito D'Rivera, Gato Barbieri, Kirsty MacColl, and Special EFX.*

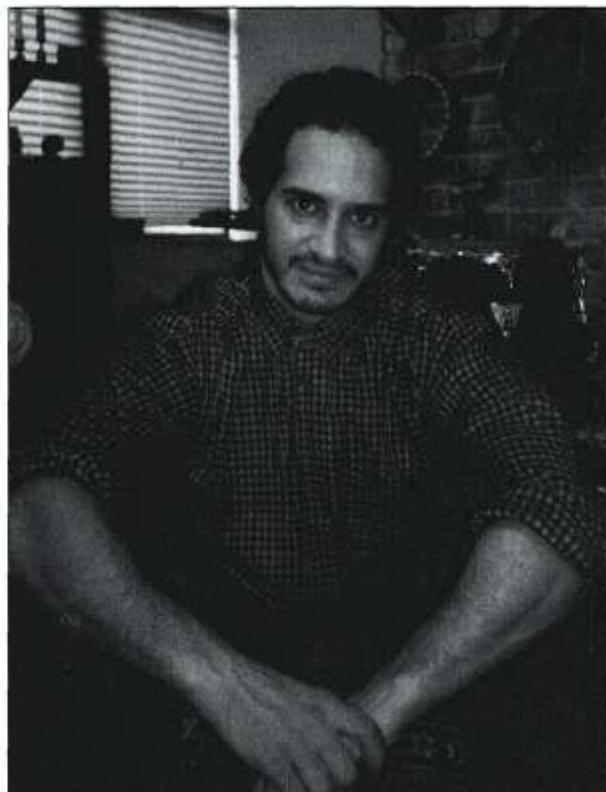
**TS:** You've played on many releases, yet you've maintained a fairly low profile.

**RA:** I've probably done about fifty records. I've been with Dave Valentin for the last nine records, and I've recorded with Ruben Blades pretty regularly for the last several years. I also play and tour with Ruben's band—minus Ruben, as an instrumental band. I've also done a lot with Kip Hanrahan. That's a very eclectic band with people like Jack Bruce, the guitar player from the Meters, Alan Toussaint, and Don Pullen. We usually do two or three recording projects and one or two tours a year, but it's hard to get everybody together because we're from all over the world. So I'm basically involved with those bands—plus free-lance studio work and occasional short tours with other people.

**TS:** Do you think that the musical diversity you've fostered has been the key to your success?

**RA:** I think it helps. I've always been interested in many types of music. When I was a kid, rock was a big thing for me, but by the time I was in junior high I was listening to a lot of straight-ahead jazz as well. I was also listening to a lot of Afro-Cuban, Latin, and salsa music because I was around a lot of people who played that kind of music when I was growing up in New Haven, Connecticut. When I moved to New York, one of the first things I got called to do was Latin-jazz based. But being diverse has also helped me to get calls for straight jazz and rock things.

**TS:** There's a lot going on in Afro-Cuban music that's beyond the



realm of just the drumkit. How do you meet the requirements for both drums and percussion?

**RA:** A lot of what I do is applying percussion sections—ensemble parts—to the drums while still taking care of what the drums are doing. I'll include the cowbells while still playing hi-hat and snare.

Some people call Afro-Cuban "Afro-Caribbean," too. When the slaves were brought over from Africa, they ended up in different parts of the New World. As a result, their music was integrated with different Western influences. So today every country—from Haiti to Brazil to Cuba to Puerto Rico—has a distinct style.

Cuba really flourished musically at the turn of the century, from its classical players to the Afro-Cuban music. A lot of it is polyphonic percussion—the root of African music—plus voice and drums. So when you speak of Afro-Cuban music, you're generally speaking of a percussion section with a band. Drums are something relatively new to the music. In the U.S., salsa proper never incorporated drums until Ruben Blades did it. It was just congas, timbales, and bongos.

But there has been a strong relationship between Afro-Cuban



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music and jazz for a while. Dizzy Gillespie was one of the first to integrate it into jazz during the '40s, while Cuban musicians who were interested in jazz incorporated that into their music. This type of music also flourished in Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and New York.

**TS:** Speaking of flourishing, how did your interests in drumming first begin to flourish?

**RA:** I had a teacher in fourth grade who gave me three records: one by John Coltrane, an early Miles record, and a Cecil Taylor record. When I heard those, I flipped out.

**TS:** Isn't it pretty unusual for a ten-year-old to have a grasp of that kind of music?

**RA:** I'm not saying I *understood* everything that was going on with those records. But I think you can be very open at a young age and you can go in with fewer preconceptions. By the time you're sixteen, you have more peer pressure regarding what you're supposed to like and not like.

I was interested enough in the music to want to research it—which is what I think everyone should do. If the first drummer you hear is Elvin Jones, before you can understand what he's doing, you have to go back to Chick Webb. You have to go back to the sources, no matter what music you're into. Otherwise, you're just

going to scratch the surface and not say anything new in that particular form. You have to go through all the motions, imitating how Papa Jo Jones played hi-hat, then going on to Max Roach, then going on to Elvin and Tony Williams. Without that understanding, it's going to be superficial. Anyone who has said anything new on their instruments, especially in jazz, has done that. It's obvious. In almost any area—music, art, philosophy, whatever—you have to rediscover something in order to reinvent.

**TS:** Other than the research you mentioned, did you have any formal drum instruction to prepare you for your chosen career?

**RA:** I went to Berklee for two summers before I went to college. The first summer I studied bebop; the second summer I played more funk. I took private lessons from Ed Blackwell for a while, when he was Ornette Coleman's drummer. And I studied classical percussion at Yale, where I got my degree.

I never studied the Afro-Cuban stuff in a formal sense. My "studies" consisted of hanging out with the percussionists who were playing that music. I learned just from being around them.

**TS:** And then you decided to try to break into the New York scene. Were you successful right away?

**RA:** No. It's said that in order to break into the New York scene, you have to know a bunch of people there, or have a gig already



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lined up. I didn't have either of those advantages. So I began by playing on the street.

**TS:** You literally were a street musician?

**RA:** Literally, yeah. It was pretty good, too. It was a bebop quintet, and we were making sixty or seventy dollars a day per person—which wasn't bad. A lot of money was being thrown in the pot for each of us to get that much. I had a "real" gig soon after that in a jazz club—and it only paid thirty-five bucks per person because there were fifteen of us.

I think it's getting harder and harder to get established in a place like New York as the years go by. But it's not so hard that nobody can do it, because people come here all the time and make it. My feeling is that if you have it together and you have something to offer, eventually someone will hear you and you'll work. In New York, I think you have to get a reputation for playing out in the clubs if you want to be heard.

**TS:** Someone certainly must have heard you, because you got a chance to work with Dizzy Gillespie not too long after you came to New York. How did that come about?

**RA:** I was really lucky. I was about twenty-two or twenty-three, and I had only been in New York a couple of years. I had recorded one album with Dave Valentin on GRP and I had done a film

score with Dave Grusin. One day, Larry Rosen from GRP called me and asked if I wanted to record an album with Dizzy. They had actually started recording already, but the drummer they had wasn't working out. So I showed up at the studio early to meet Dizzy. We played together a little while and then we just started recording. I pretty much went in cold, so I didn't have time to be nervous.

**TS:** Did events snowball from there, or did you have to seek out work from that point onward?

**RA:** Basically, everything I've done has led to another gig—either from recommendations or through people hearing me play. So yes, the work has come to me—but you always want to work more. I think that anybody who is making a living playing music should be happy, because it's a gift. Just the word "playing"—as in playing music—is very different than "working" as it applies to a job.

**TS:** On every project you play on, no matter how intricate your percussion and kit playing, there always seems to be an air of complete spontaneity—as if *you feel* rather than contemplate your playing.

**RA:** That's definitely where I'm coming from. No matter what style of music you play, the more you hear it and play it, the more you're going to instinctively feel what's suitable to play. It's a

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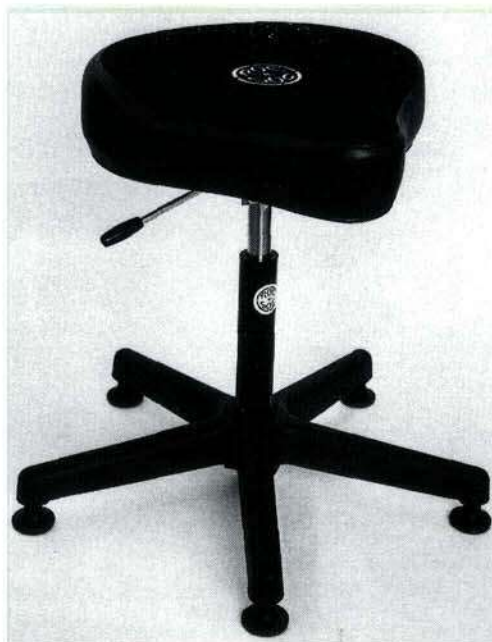
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process of osmosis.

**TS:** You recently collaborated with bassist Lincoln Goines on a book called *Funkifying The Clave: Afro-Cuban Grooves For Bass And Drums* [Manhattan Music]. What's the book's focus, and how has it been received?

**RA:** It's basically about applying Afro-Cuban rhythms in a modern context. It's a book/cassette package, and it's done really well. We're going to be doing a couple of videos for DCI to go along with it.

**TS:** Any unfulfilled aspirations?

**RA:** Actually, I just want to do more of what I'm already doing. As I said, you can *always* be working more and reaching to get better. I enjoy the diversity of the projects that I do, and I hope I continue to get called for lots of different things. I've dabbled in composing, but it's something that so many people do much better than I do that I don't take it too seriously. I'm sort of a co-leader of Seis de Solar—Ruben Blades' offshoot band—and that has been fun. But I really enjoy being a sideman and playing with different people. It breaks things up when you move around a lot. You're not around the same people all the time, and things stay interesting.



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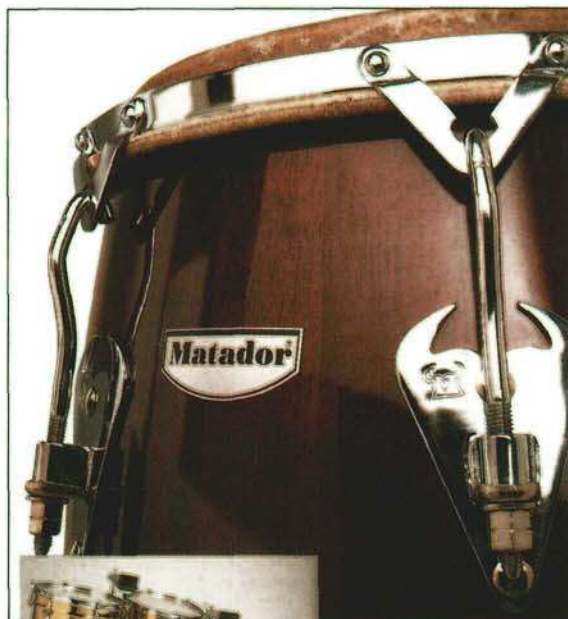


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JOEL ROSENBLATT

continued from page 29

York, which is a suburb, and I was doing club dates on the weekends. During the week I was going to New York to hear people play, and going to the jam sessions. There were a lot more jam sessions back then than there are now. I was doing a gig on Bleecker Street at a club called Preachers, which is no longer there. They didn't have a cabaret license, which meant there were no drums allowed and no dancing. But all the drummers got around that by playing Simmons drums. I had invested all this money into the SDS7s, which was ridiculous. I used to go down at 4:00 in the afternoon to set up to beat the traffic, and the gig was from 8:00 to 2:00. I would get home around 3:30 or 4:00, and it paid \$20. But that was the hang. I did that every Monday for two months. It was a nightmare. I got my car broken into. I was losing money. But Hiram Bullock came and hung out, although it was kind of a drag for me because I was playing Simmons, which sucked because I couldn't really show what I could do. Then I did the Matt "Guitar" Murphy thing for about a year, touring the country, driving around.

**RF:** How did that come up?

**JR:** A tenor player friend of mine recommended me for the gig. It was just a slamming blues gig and good for endurance. It was real authentic. We had a Hammond B3, Matt, bass, drums, and tenor, and it was just blues. The *Blues Brothers* movie was big, and we were touring colleges where there would be Blues Brothers parties. They'd watch the movie and we'd play. It was fun.

After that, I was in Pure Prairie League for a year and a half, sort of when they were on their way down. That was the most fun I think I've ever had. It was a great bunch of guys, and we traveled by bus.

**RF:** That doesn't fit the profile here. It doesn't seem like something a jazz-head would be interested in doing.

**JR:** It was work.

**RF:** But you said you loved it.

**JR:** I loved it because I loved the guys. The whole experience was great. Musically it was not nearly as interesting as I would like to play, but it grooved and there was a tremendously good feeling on stage. Nobody was going, "I can play better than

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you, you need to get this together...." Everybody got along. It was simple, but it was good.

**RF:** Where had you learned to be simple?

**JR:** Believe me, when I first got that gig, they had to seriously chill me out. Originally I was subbing. I did seven sub gigs, and we had such a blast that when the original drummer had some problems getting back, they asked me to join.

**RF:** But musically they needed you to calm down.

**JR:** Yes, but they kind of dug it. The bass player, Mike Reilly, was pretty cool. He was a jazz lover, even though he didn't play jazz. I was infecting the band with a little different energy, so they accepted a lot of stuff I did. I got to play a solo. To me, any kind of music played well is valid. There's shitty music in all styles.

Then I got the Michel Camilo gig. The most fun I remember having was when I was juggling PPL, Michel Camilo, and a Motown/R&B band at the same time. That was the best. I was working almost every night and getting to play different styles. It was such a productive situation for me; I would never get stale. Then Michel started getting busier, and of course I was going to go with that.

**RF:** What did that require of you?

**JR:** Here's another heavily motivational thing. I really had to get a lot together on that gig. The only Latin stuff I knew was a Steve Gadd mozambique and a Steve Gadd samba. Michel taught me everything. He's not a drummer, but he's aware of the different parts that make up certain grooves. He would teach me the parts of the grooves, one at a time. I would have my *Walkman* and he would say, "Okay, we're going to learn a song. The cowbell player is playing this groove, and the conga player is playing this, and the bass player is playing this." I would have these eight or nine parts and try to transfer them to the drumset. He sang the individual grooves into my little *Walkman*, and I would try to assign one groove to a limb. I had all these individual parts on tape, and I had to make them all fit together. Obviously, I couldn't do everything, but I had to pick out the juiciest and most meaningful parts and make them all fit together.

**RF:** Why do you think he went to all that trouble?

**JR:** I'll use his words: He wanted to "mold me." He wanted somebody who didn't have any preconceived ideas of how his music should be played. He wanted to take a clean slate and custom-fit the drummer to his music.

**RF:** You inherited that gig from Dave Weckl, right?

**JR:** Dave got me the audition. I found out that Dave got the Chick Corea gig, and he casually mentioned that he gave Michel my name and that he was going to call me for an audition. I said, "You did *what*?" So Michel called me, and we set up an audition in ten days. I was going out of my mind. I hibernated and hit it hard. I practiced more in those ten days than I did in the whole two years before that. I knew what I was going to audition on. I was a fan of Michel's because I used to go to see Dave play. I had the stuff memorized any-

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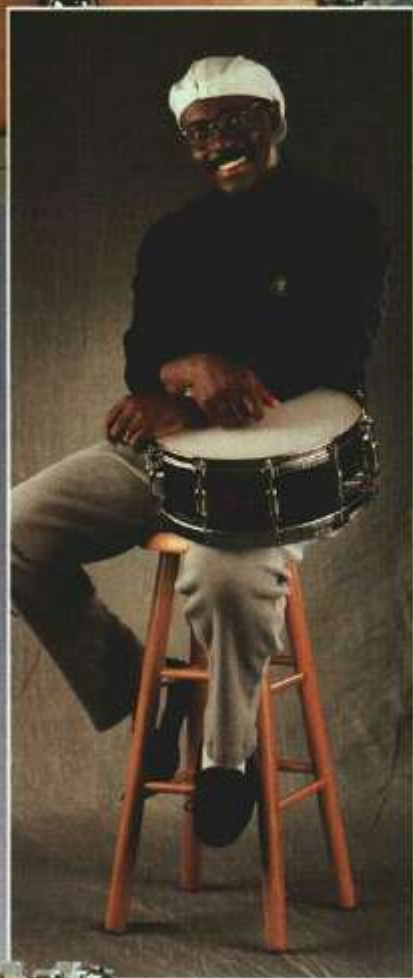


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way, but singing along with the band and actually playing the gig are two different things. I went in there and auditioned, and I thought I completely botched it. But I think Michel saw a spark and the hunger. I was definitely hungry. I wanted that gig more than anything. Maybe he liked me. I had a good attitude. I wasn't giving him any kind of ego thing.

**RF:** How do you think you botched it?

**JR:** I didn't play it as well as I thought I could have. I was heavily intimidated by Anthony [Jackson], who was my bass player idol. If you don't know Anthony, he can be very sullen, and because I didn't know him, I thought he hated me. Years later, I reminded him of how he made me feel, and he said, "What are you talking about?" He had no idea.

**RF:** I read an article with you where you mentioned that you tape yourself when you play.

**JR:** Oh God, yes. When you're young and you say to a more schooled musician, "What do you think? How do I sound?" They'll say, "That sounded good. Your time needs a little work and you rushed this fill...." That's great, but when you're a professional, you're expected to be at a certain level. Nobody is going to be as critical as you are of yourself. I can't trust anyone to tell me the truth.

The perfect example is with Dave. When Dave and I were in college together and we were both growing, I would go to his gig. He'd say, "What did you think of that?" I'd say, "That sounded good, but this was...." He'd come to my gig and it would be the same kind of thing. As years go by it becomes, "Dave, what do you think?" "You sound great, man." You don't get any feedback, and I don't need to hear that. Everybody is going to tell me I sound great. Only my closest friends might offer some constructive criticism. So I tape myself and I say, "Man, I sucked" or "That was good." It's hard to listen to that stuff.

**RF:** How often do you tape yourself?

**JR:** As often as I can. I have a portable DAT that I take on the road. I tape as many Spyro gigs as is convenient for our sound man. Sometimes he doesn't have time to get a mix together. I just check it out to see what worked and what didn't work. I think it was Jack DeJohnette who said that ideally, when you're playing in a band, you want to have an out-of-body experience

and sit in the fourth row and listen to the whole group. Then you're being objective. You want to get away from the drums and listen to the whole unit and see how you can contribute to that. Don't be so self-centered. I may think I'm doing that when I'm playing, but when I listen to it after the fact, I can *really* hear it.

It's important that your own idea of what you're doing and what's being projected are the same. That's really hard to do. Sometimes we listen to gigs and we sound incredible. Other times we sound terrible; What's the secret? Why does it vary? It's all mental. It has nothing to do with how much you practice.

**RF:** So you feel it's just your attitude when you go onstage?

**JR:** Absolutely. It's about being focused and being able to pace yourself. It's not about the physical part of playing. It's all mental.

**RF:** Is that controllable? What if you have a bad day?

**JR:** If I have a bad day, I try to channel it. I'll be portraying a dark side and I'll try to utilize it. I find if I'm sick and I have to play, sometimes amazing things come out of that. I'll do the bare minimum because I'm tired and I don't want to think hard. When I listen back to it, it's the most relaxed, grooving thing I've ever done. If I'm in a good mood or somebody is in the audience I want to impress, I go overboard. The mind is an amazing thing.

**RF:** There are disagreements concerning

how much a person's personality has to do with their playing.

**JR:** Personality is what makes drummers different. We could all study the exact same Vinnie lick. He could write it out for us and show it to us, but it's not going to sound the same, because we're all interpreting it differently.

I'm into players who really reach me, guys who can play a solo with three notes and portray more emotion than a guy who is doing blinding runs. I've developed chops, but I don't want to be known as a chops guy. I want to be known as a feel guy.

**RF:** It's good to have the facility.

**JR:** Absolutely, and the less you use that, the more important those little things become. I'm still learning that, because when I listen back to myself, I think I play too busy a lot of the time. I'm always trying to edit myself and apply the "less is more" philosophy.

**RF:** The last interview you did with *Modern Drummer* was in '88, when you were still with Michel. What's happened since?

**JR:** I did three years with Michel and a few records. We came to a point where neither of us was happy. I felt like I was a little too much in a box, and Michel was critical of me. He meant well, but after every gig it was, "Why don't you try this, why don't you do that? You're rushing here, you're dragging here...."

**RF:** Had things changed with you or with

him?

**JR:** I talked to him about it, and he said that he saw such promise in me that he was trying to push me over to the next level. Unfortunately, it worked just the opposite.

**RF:** How could he have reached you?

**JR:** I don't know. He was really trying to go in a much more straight-ahead jazz vein, and I didn't really put the time into developing it like he wanted me to. I guess I just wasn't interested in playing jazz.

**RF:** What did you want to play primarily?

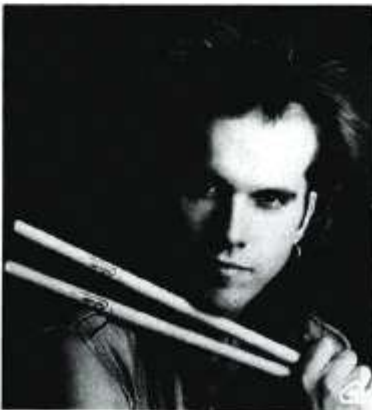
**JR:** I got burned out on a lot of notes. I was ready to play a groove kind of gig. The grass is always greener. I was with him for three years, and it was time for a change for both of us. I've talked to Michel, though, and we have plans to work together again in the future.

But we divorced, and it was a tough time for me. I thought having been with Michel Camilo was a big deal, but it was actually not a big deal at all, and I had no work for over a year. So I renovated our house. It was really scary, because we bought a house in February of '89, which we could not have done if it hadn't have been for my wife. We did a smart thing and bought the house using only her income to qualify, as if I were completely unemployed. So even if I wasn't working, I would not have to go bag groceries at the A&P. We didn't live past our means.

**RF:** It was cool of her not to say, "Get a job."

**JR:** She is very cool. She's a frustrated

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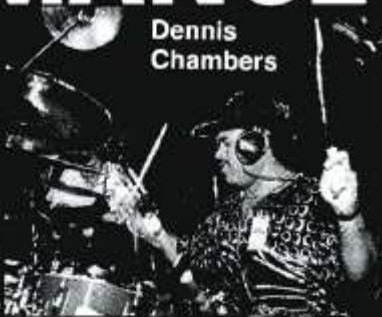
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artist, so she really appreciates what I do and understands what it's like. She's completely understanding. So in order not to go crazy, I worked on the house.

I got so into building that house that it took my mind off of things. I was getting so much gratification from working seven hours and at the end of the day having something to show for it. The phone wasn't ringing, so I was starting to do weddings again, and I was thinking, "I can't go in reverse like this." I was considering just cutting it loose completely.

**RF:** And you weren't depressed about it?

**JR:** I was a little depressed, but I was more depressed having to load my drums in through the kitchen and playing the Feinstein bar mitzvah.

**RF:** What were you thinking about doing?

**JR:** I was thinking about buying and fixing up houses for sale. I was thinking about going into business with my dad. Then I started working with Steve Khan, who was fantastic, but he didn't have a lot of work. Then I was working with Eliane Elias, who is a fantastic Brazilian pianist. I was juggling those two gigs, which were musically incredible—but financially they weren't doing anything. I was thirty years old at the time and thinking about the future. I didn't want to end up a bitter musician. I was thinking, "I need a simpler kind of gig that will appeal to a lot of people, but still have some jazz influences." But there are like five gigs in the world like that, like the Chick gig, the Yellowjackets, the Rippingtons, and Spyro Gyra. Then what do you know—I get a call from Colin Schofield at Zildjian, who had just gotten off the phone with Richie Morales, who had said words to the effect that he was going to be leaving Spyro Gyra. I called Richie, and he was surprised to hear I'd be interested. He got me an audition. The Spyro thing saved me.

**RF:** What was the audition like?

**JR:** It was interesting. The band didn't make it an open audition, so it was narrowed down to fifteen guys that somebody in the band had to know of. They did three days, five guys a day, and all the guys had to do the same three tunes. It was on a cassette, and they gave me a time slot. The interesting thing was that I had heard that they had already decided on somebody, and just as a courtesy they were going to go through with the other auditions. Since I thought I was already done I went in there

completely relaxed and just played it down in fifteen minutes and I was out of there. I never expected to hear anything. Maybe they had decided on someone and changed their mind, or maybe I heard wrong information, but I got the call.

**RF:** What impressed me about the new album was the sheer variety of styles. There's jazz, rock, reggae—even a second-line thing.

**JR:** This band is great for that. There's definitely all the styles happening, so it's perfect for me. It's not a real jazz gig where it's like, "On your mark, get set, go," and the tune comes out different every night. There is definitely an architecture to the tunes that we follow. You're giving up a little bit of that flexibility in order to have more of a mass appeal.

**RF:** Is Spyro a band, or are you considered a sideman?

**JR:** We're all sidemen, except for Jay [Beckenstein], who owns the band. We have nothing to do with the merchandising or the publishing. We are just the sidemen. We have a contract and a guaranteed number of days of work. Our input is encouraged when we're recording, but none of us

has the final say. There's got to be a leader. But for someone like me who has never had a guarantee of anything in my life, to have it with this band gives me peace of mind.

**RF:** Of all your recorded work, what is the most representative of your playing, and what are you proudest of?

**JR:** First, let me preface this by saying that whenever I listen to myself, I'm always looking for improvement. I'm never completely happy with what I'm hearing, but when I listen to the whole piece of music, it has validity. It's important to be objective and not so narrow-minded that you're just listening to your own performance.

A little piece of trivia is that I'm on a Pure Prairie League record called *Momentos*. It was one of the first records I actually did. We re-recorded their hits plus five new tunes. This was a stretch for me because I was such a jazz player. We went to Columbus, Ohio to record. It was definitely my first lesson in restraint. They wanted a support player; they didn't want to know all the wild things I could do.

On the first record I did with Michel Camilo, called *In Trio*, there's a ballad

called "Las Olas," which I'm playing brushes on. I'm kind of amazed that it's me. There's also a cut on there called "We Three." I didn't really think it was that great, but I still get comments on it. That's kind of a burning track. It's the only thing I recorded with Anthony Jackson. On the next Michel record, *Michel Camilo*, there's a tune called "Caribe."

**RF:** What do you like about it?

**JR:** I've got to tell you, I don't really like it, but everybody else does. [laughs] They think there's stuff that is overdubbed on it, and it seems amazing to people that I did it all at once. At the time, I was using a lot of cowbells with my drumset, and I had integrated them into the groove. It was all done at once. I guess the feel is good, but the thing I don't like about it is that it's edgy. It was the spirit of the day, though, and I guess it works with the genre that it's in. It's a real fast song, and I play a solo over a montuno.

Michel's stuff was all done live, so it was like "boom," it was over and that was the end of that. It wasn't like we took a lot of time. The Spyro thing is definitely a lot more produced. And my role in Spyro

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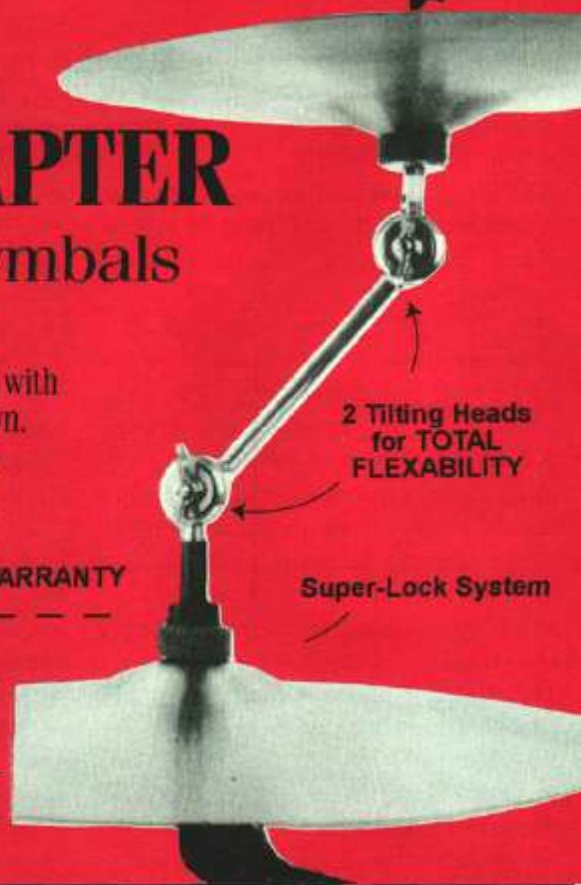
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Gyra is a lot different than it was with Michel. With Michel it was an instrumental trio, so you're expected to contribute a lot more to fill it up and really shape the direction of where the tune is going to go. With Spyro Gyra, there's a producer involved who is giving us guidelines. A lot of it was done with a click track so they could chop and edit. My role in Spyro is much more of a team player.

**RF:** Of the Spyro material, which is your favorite?

**JR:** There's a tune on *Three Wishes* called "Real Time" where I like the sound of the drums. I remember listening to the tune when I heard the record, and I couldn't believe it was me—not because it was so technically amazing, but because it just didn't *sound* like me; it sounded more like Peter Erskine. Again, it has a little bit of an edge to it, but that's kind of the way I play. Sometimes when I listen to myself back, it sounds a little nervous. I would like to be able to sound nice and relaxed, although to other people it does sound relaxed. Who knows?

On that same record is a tune called "Gliding," which is interesting because of

the way I came up with the pattern. When Dave Samuels, who wrote the tune, gave me the demo to work on before the recording session, he gave me a very simple computer demo without a click track on it. When I learned the tune, I heard beat 1 in the wrong spot. So when it came time to rehearse the tune, I had to think completely ass-backwards, and I had to relearn it with 1 in the proper place. Because I had heard it incorrectly in the first place, I came up with a groove that I never would have thought of otherwise.

On *Dreams Beyond Control*, I like "Birks Law." That tune sounds very relaxed. "Patterns In The Rain," which is one of the vocal tunes, was a one-shot take. That tune originally was a straight 16th-note ballad, but when we were running it down, it wasn't feeling good. They dumped the cut and we had to do it again, so we started screwing around between takes. I started turning it into a reggae kind of feel. Everyone else jumped in. The producer came over the talk-back and said, "Go with this, I like it." We started messing around with it and got it in the second take. I like "Bahia" also, which is another

Dave Samuels tune.

There's a Paquito D'Rivera record called *Celebration* that I did about the same time I was working with Michel. On it is a tune called "Chick," dedicated to Chick Corea. It's got a nice swing feel on it, and it has a drum solo. It's one of those things where people comment on my drumming.

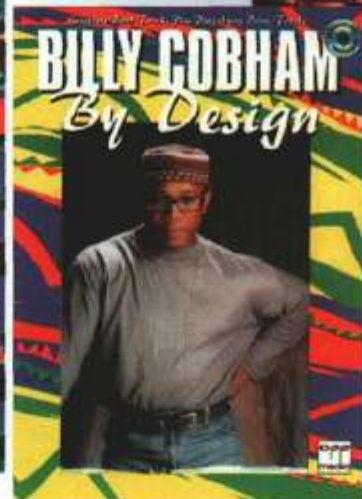
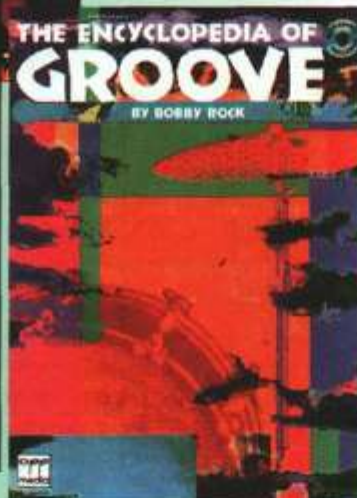
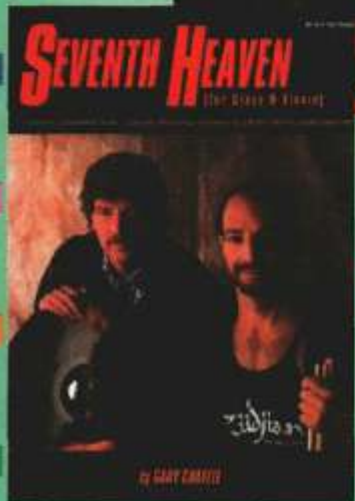
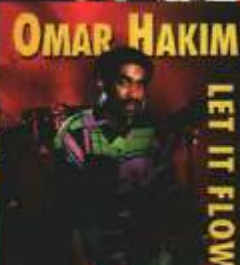
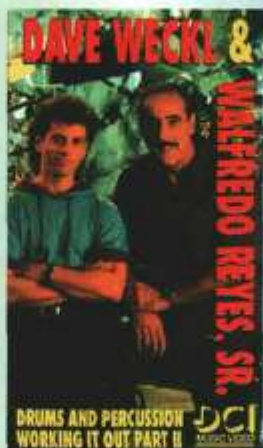
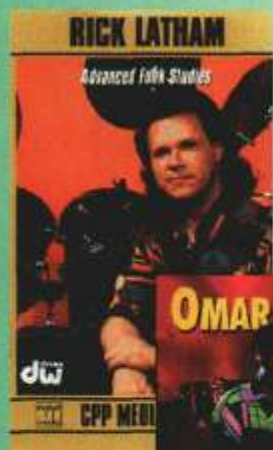
**RF:** So what's the goal?

**JR:** I've never been in one band as long as I've been with Spyro. I'm realizing there's a little trade-off. For stability, you have to give up a little artistic freedom. If it were a perfect world, I would be busy doing ten projects at once and have them all be different styles, always playing with new musicians and always growing. That's impossible—or rare, at best.

It's hard to have a long-term goal because you never know what's going to happen. So my goals are short-ranged: Even though I'm playing the same set every night, I'm trying to make it sound fresh and come up with a new idea so it doesn't sound like we're regurgitating the same stuff every night. That's a big challenge. If the short-term goals are successful, that's going to lead to something.



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# Electronic Drums And The Free-lance Scene

by Mark S. Andes

Much has been written on the use of electronics in the studio or in clubs with a steady group. However, using electronic drums on the free-lance scene requires some special considerations.

### Why Do It?

This is the first obstacle you must overcome if you want to use electronics on a free-lance date. After all, you got hired without the electronics, the leader likes your playing, and you've refined your setup so you can get in and out of the most difficult rooms without a fuss. Why drag in a bunch of pads, wires, and amplifiers when you don't have to?

First, unless you're playing society or cocktail music, unmiked acoustic drums can't produce the sound needed for much of the music played on free-lance dates. Most pop recordings are made with drum machines, drummers playing samples with pads, or acoustic drums processed with lots of expensive studio gear.

Second, with electronics you don't have to hit as hard to produce a good sound. Many rooms have thick drapes and carpeting, which makes it difficult for an acoustic drumset to be heard over even moderately sized guitar and keyboard amps. Thick carpets and drapes also soak up all the highs, leaving you with a thuddy, boomy drum sound.

The third reason is competition. Let's face it: Free-lance players compete for jobs. So if you can do something to *stand out* from the crowd, it could mean more jobs in the future.

### The Setup

The setup I recommend for free-lance work consists of an acoustic snare and bass set up to trigger samples, acoustic cymbals, and two electronic pads. Two pads are sufficient because they can be mounted easily on the bass drum with no need to carry a heavy-duty cymbal stand for the third tom pad. Two toms are quite enough, and you can use the lighter-weight cymbal stands many clubdate players use.

I don't recommend doing a free-lance job with an all-electronic setup, for several reasons: First, if the power or your electronics go down, the leader will probably never forgive you, making your future employment questionable. With the recommended setup, should the worst happen, you can still finish the gig with snare, bass, and cymbals.

Second, it takes a huge amount of amplifier power and big speakers to reproduce the sound of a snare and bass drum. When you trigger from acoustics, you'll be using the electronics to beef up and modify your acoustic drum sounds—not to supply the entire sound—so you can use much smaller speakers and amps.

While you certainly want your toms to be heard, they're generally lower in volume than the snare or bass, and a smaller amp setup will work very well.

Finally, you never know when the leader may change the type of music you're expecting to play. I remember contracting the music for a party given by a large company. The party planner had told me they wanted a "Dirty Dancing" theme with music from the '50s and '60s. However, when the head of the company arrived, she told the party planner she didn't like rock and wanted cocktail music. Hence, we ended up playing Cole Porter all evening. While I could have managed on an all-electronic kit, the hybrid acoustic kit was much more suitable. I simply turned off the electronics.

### The Gear

This article is by no means an endorsement of any particular brand of equipment. However, I've found that some types of gear work better than others for this type of application. Let's look at each area individually.

**Modules:** You must use an electronic module made for triggering from acoustic drums. The Alesis *D4* module and the KAT products work well.

I also suggest sound modules with built-in reverb. This frees you from having to fiddle around with an outboard reverb unit. Your attention must be focused on the music—not the electronics. Certainly, an outboard reverb *can* be used, but be careful not to get overly absorbed in finding the "perfect" reverb during the gig.

It's also best to keep the reverb times on the short side. I generally use three: *gated* (for the "Phil Collins" sound), *room* (for most kits), and *small hall* (for a "rock" or "ambient" kit). Long reverbs may sound great at home, but they wash out on the job.

**Triggers:** There are two basic types: ddrum triggers, which attach to the rims, and the more common Barcus Berry type, which attach to the head with glue or adhesives. After extensive experience triggering from acoustic drums, I've found the ddrum triggers easier to use and more reliable than anything else I've tried. However, the glue-on triggers will work better if you attach them to the heads with GE *Silicone Seal* instead of the adhesive supplied by the company. The tape always loosens up and leads to false triggering.

I also don't suggest separately triggering the snare and rim unless you're very experienced with this sort of work. It's much easier to turn the snare trigger off when you need a rim click. The way I do it is with one kit set up with no snare sample. I use this kit when I want the rim sound of the acoustic snare while retaining the rest of my electronic kit. Or, you could have a kit with a rim sample assigned to one of the pads, and call that kit up when you need the rim sound. But remember, this is a free-lance gig, and the less kit selection done the better. Keep it as simple as possible.

**Amplification:** The most difficult part of using electronic drums for free-lance work is the selection of amplification. Obviously, it has to be portable, but more importantly, it must be compact enough to fit on a cramped bandstand.

In most cases, it's more practical to use a self-contained keyboard amp than separate PA speakers and power amps. It's much easier to plug into an amp and play than it is to assemble an entire sound system. I use an amp made by the Barbetta Company with a 15" speaker and a horn. It's compact and weighs under fifty pounds. I own two of them, and I'll use both if I'm using a fully electronic setup, and one if I'm triggering from acoustic drums. These amps put out a lot of sound for their size. I've also used keyboard amps by Peavey, Roland, and TOA, all of which worked well.

Whatever amplifier you choose, here are some general hints:

- 1) **Leave the EQ alone!** While the temptation is to go for a booming bass, you're not going to achieve it with a keyboard amp. EQ also eats up all the precious power you need for volume. The newer sound modules sound great without EQ anyway. Just find samples you like and leave them alone.
- 2) **Get the amp off the floor.** Put your amp on a chair or a milk crate next to your drums so everyone can hear the sound better.
- 3) **Two smaller mediums are better than one large one.** Two keyboard amps with 12" speakers and a horn can put out more sound than one amp with a 15" speaker and a horn. Two amps also spread the sound across the bandstand and the audience better than one. Of course, this assumes you're using two *high-quality* smaller amps. Don't expect cheap amps to perform on a professional level. Buy the best you can afford.
- 4) **Select short samples with character and punch.** Long samples get muddy in boomy rooms. You'll be better off with tighter sounds with distinct character that can be appreciated even at lower volumes. The Alesis "Pop Shot" sound is one of my favorites. It cuts through the band at low volumes and sounds great when triggered on top of an acoustic snare.

### Before The Gig

Once you've decided to take the plunge with electronics on a free-lance gig, there are certain preparations you should attend to. The first is programming, which calls for extreme discipline. I recommend a maximum of four drumkits on your first few jobs, and no more than six on *any* free-lance gig.

Set up one "all-purpose" kit with a tight bass drum sample, a pretty acoustic snare that won't get on everyone's nerves after two songs, and two toms—one medium-high and one medium-low. This kit will be used for at least eighty percent of the job, so make

it a *good* one. Basically, the kit should sound like a miked-up acoustic kit. Use a little reverb on the snare and toms to spread the sound, but keep it fairly dry. Stay away from those super-low floor toms that get lost in the band.

The second kit could be a "dance" or "pop" kit with a punchy bass drum, gated toms, and one of the many "pop" snare sounds heard on modern recordings. The Roland 909-type sound is popular and works well on most dance tunes.

Your third kit should be a "Latin" kit with high and low congas or timbales. And the fourth can be a "big" kit, very much like your all-purpose kit, but with more aggressive samples suited to rock.

That's it! Resist the temptation to have the "perfect" kit for every song. It won't work in a free-lance context.

### During The Gig

You've perfected your setup and you've brought it on the job. Now's the time for discipline and restraint. First, *don't feel the need to use electronics on every song*. If the gig starts out with a bossa nova, use only acoustic drums. The effect of electronics is much more dramatic when used sparingly. Second, *don't fiddle with the electronics during the job*. Nothing annoys a bandleader more than a drummer who's not paying attention. Do your programming at home and tweak your equipment as little as possible on the gig.

Finally, *avoid the urge to constantly change kits*. Most musicians are accustomed to the sound of an acoustic kit. When you continually change sounds you pull the carpet out from under their feet. Use your general-purpose kit for the most part and switch kits only when necessary. When your bandmates begin to accept the electronics, you can then be a little more daring with your choice of sounds.

### The End Result

If you follow the guidelines above, I think you'll meet with warm acceptance from bandleaders and musicians. They'll appreciate the time and effort you put in to help the band sound better.

I remember one gig where I brought an electronic kit, which the leader wasn't expecting. He nervously watched me set up and didn't say a word. But I could tell he was expecting the worst. The first tune he called was Madonna's "Vogue." I had my "dance kit" up and began the tune. It was great to watch his face light up like a Christmas tree when he heard the drums sounding just like the record. Now he *asks* me to bring electronic drums to his job—and he even pays my \$50 cartage fee for the extra effort!

"Unless you're playing society or cocktail music, unmiked acoustic drums can't produce the sound needed for much of the music played on free-lance dates."



# The Anatomy Of Style

by Andrew Kollmorgen

Most of us end up playing the kind of music we love most. But when you're a workaday drummer—which so many of us have to be to survive—it's necessary to master styles of music that aren't necessarily near to your heart.

The genuine execution of style is a shady area of drumming. Drummers often underestimate the difficulty in making the simplest of styles feel right. There's a tendency among the uninitiated to miss the nuances and subtleties that make a particular style work.

Invariably, the most adept practitioners of a given style are those who have made it their own through concentrated listening, considerable effort, and experience. What is needed is an authentic understanding—and, more importantly, an appreciation—of the style in question.

An all-too-common mistake (committed mostly by the inexperienced or narrow-minded) is to equate the technical demands of a part with its musical value. According to this mistaken way of thinking, if simplicity is called for, then the part is too easy and not worthy of musical respect. This neatly sidesteps consideration of the most crucial aspect of any drum part: *feel*. It is feel—the extent to which the part propels the music in a natural, unforced way—that makes or breaks a drum part. Feel is the underpinning of style, and has very little to do with chops. And true feel comes only with a real appreciation of the music. You've got to love it, or at least respect it, to play it well.

A pointed illustration of this is an episode I witnessed more than once while attending a certain highly acclaimed music college. Having fallen prey to the fallacy myself, I knew well just how invalid the idea was.

It seems that aficionados of high-octane, jazz-fusion drumming (the kind that

requires musical gymnastics few can pull off) got it into their heads that straightforward rock drumming, or even the more stylized approach of a Bonham or Watts, was too undemanding to take seriously. Since relatively few actual notes are called for, it must be a musical cakewalk.

The telling moment came when one of the aforementioned parties sat down and tried, with open disdain, to duplicate a straight rock groove. He couldn't do it. What was worse, he seemed unaware that

"Drummers  
today are called  
upon to play a  
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It's easy to  
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attempt."



his mere duplication of notes didn't even approach the finesse of what he was attempting to ridicule.

So there's a danger in mistaking chops for versatility. Many of our best players do one thing well and are content to stay within the bounds of what they're best at. You wouldn't normally hear Max Roach trying to lay down a hard rock groove. But you wouldn't hear him belittle the artistry involved in doing so, either. Staying with-

in the bounds of what comes naturally is a great artistic discipline. In today's musical world, however, we are called upon to play a number of styles, and play them authentically. It's easy to bungle the attempt.

Perhaps the best example is reggae music. Reggae is infectious stuff, and its elusive, lilting feel has been assimilated into many different kinds of music. Most famously, Stewart Copeland took it and made it his own. But anyone who has ever overdosed on Bob Marley knows how deceptively tricky it is to skank along in a truly island-like way. A period of intent and thorough listening must come first. Our limbs can only do what our mind tells them to, and our mind only knows what it's been given a chance to learn. It's a matter of gently and thoughtfully plugging away until it clicks and becomes second nature.

When I was determined to learn how to play genuine jazz—not just diddle around with the pattern we all know and throw in some random snare and kick movement—my teacher at the time gave me a stack of records and said: Listen! I wanted to plow ahead and master the form through dogged effort, but plowing wasn't going to do it.

Listening is one of those "try easy" notions that comes hard to a lot of dedicated drummers. But it's the only route to real growth. As in all creative endeavors, there comes a time when you need to take stock of how you go about your work and be willing to try something new. Truly appreciating and figuring out unfamiliar styles of music is one of those times.

There are more styles of music under the sun than we could ever get under our belts, but the continuing effort to take in as much as possible is what keeps us moving upward and outward. And the countless nuances and subtleties of a genuinely executed style, the infinitesimal detail that makes a part work, is what keeps us humble.



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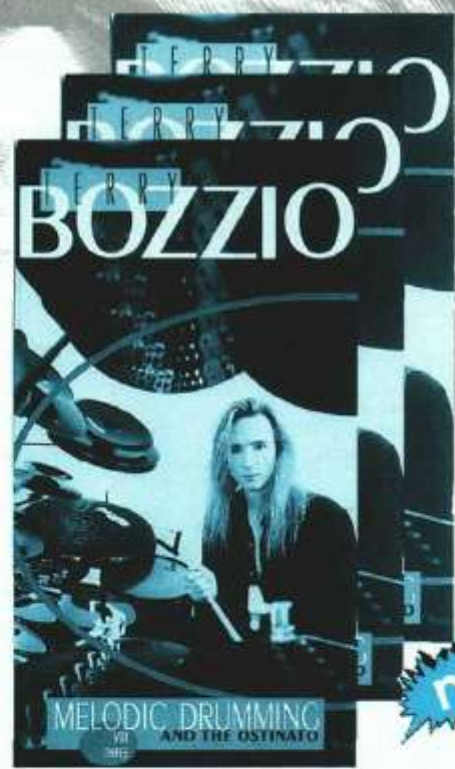
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## TERRY BOZZIO: MELODIC DRUMMING and the OSTINATO

Volumes 1, 2, 3



**new**

Terry Bozzio - the percussionist/drummer that first realized Frank Zappa's Black Page drum piece, the founding member of ground breaking Missing Persons, the drummer for the Grammy Award winning Guitar Shop album and tour with Jeff Beck, and much too much more to mention it anywhere without writing a book.

In the *Melodic Drumming and the Ostinato* video series Terry performs at least one full length drum solo piece in each video. Between the drum pieces Terry discusses the idea of approaching the modern drum set as an orchestra within itself, utilizing the concepts of ostinato patterns, melodic/harmonic and contrapuntal drum patterns, asymmetric hand/foot double bass patterns, flam/tom cymbal combinations, polyrhythms and much more. Each video is accompanied by many musical examples in Terry's own hand writing. Whether you simply want to marvel at Terry's playing and intellect or seriously wish to study radical drumming concepts, this video series is a must have in every library. Videos stand on their own or form a progressive three volume complete set.

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### DOANE PERRY: CREATIVE LISTENING

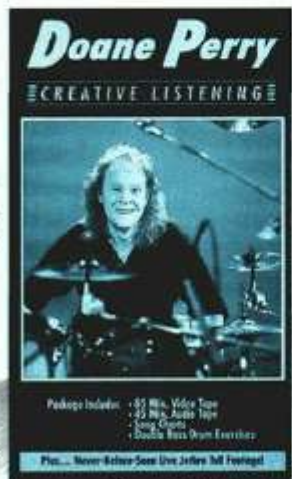
Doane is currently best known for his powerful, creative and dynamic style of drumming in Jethro Tull. His unique musicality has enabled him to work with many other artists including Bette Midler and Todd Rundgren.

In *Creative Listening*, Doane demonstrates, through five original compositions, the process of "hearing" music and the creative responses which serve it. Examples include double bass drumming, orchestration, free-form soloing, and working within the framework of a click track. This video includes an audio tape, music with and without drums, complete with click track, a booklet with charts, and rare heretofore unreleased Jethro Tull footage at the end of the video. Level: Beginning to Pro / Running time: 85 minutes

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### JOE PORCARO: ON DRUMS

With thousands of album and soundtrack credits, Joe is highly acclaimed and certainly one of the busiest TV / film session percussionists. He is also co-director of the world famous Percussion Institute of Technology (P.I.T.).

In *Joe Porcaro On Drums*, Joe presents methods which he teaches privately at P.I.T., and includes the demonstration and discussion of orchestrated cymbal turnarounds, Tehais, drum fills, odd groupings, and Joe's famous hand and finger techniques. The video also features Joe and his great trio which includes Kenny Wild (bass), and Tom Ranier (piano).  
 Level: Intermediate-Pro / Running Time: 65 minutes.



# Rolling Around The Kit

by Robert Onellion

**MUSIC KEY**



Here's a simple exercise designed to help you move around the kit more fluently and quickly with long and short rolls.

The initial warm-up (Exercise 1) should be played on the snare drum only. Note that the exercise starts out with short three-stroke rolls, and gradually works up to the long roll. Be sure you're totally comfortable with Exercise 1 before proceeding.

①

The exercise is written on six staves of music, each representing a measure of 4/4 time. The notation consists of eighth notes grouped into rolls. The first staff starts with a circled '1' and shows a continuous eighth-note roll. The second staff introduces accents (>) on the eighth notes. The third staff continues with accents, showing a progression of roll lengths. The fourth staff shows a longer roll with accents. The fifth staff continues the progression. The sixth staff shows a final long roll with an accent. The exercise is designed to build fluency and speed in moving around the kit with long and short rolls.

If you look closely, you'll see that Exercise 2 utilizes the exact same roll format as Exercise 1. However, the rolls now move from snare drum to rack toms, and then to the floor tom. Take it slowly at first, concentrating on accuracy. Also pay close attention to the accents—they give the exercise a stronger feeling of forward momentum. Be aware that some of the measures will involve cross-sticking. You should also practice the exercise with your bass drum on all four beats and the hi-hat on 2 and 4.

With a little practice and patience, you should be able to move your rolls around to any part of the kit with relative ease.

2

The exercise is a 4-measure drum roll in 4/4 time, marked with a circled '2'. It is written on a single staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation consists of six lines of music, each containing four measures. The first line is marked with a circled '2'. The notation uses eighth notes and sixteenth notes to create a continuous roll. Accents (>) are placed above specific notes in each measure to indicate forward momentum. The exercise moves from snare drum to rack toms and then to the floor tom. The final measure of the sixth line ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.



## RECORDINGS

### JOEY BARON

#### *Tongue In Groove*

(JMT 849158-2)

**Joey Baron: dr**

**Steve Swell: tbn**

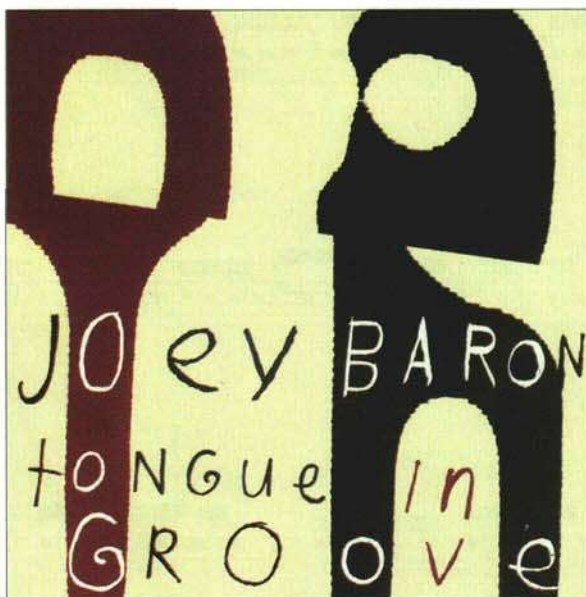
**Ellery Eskelin: tn sx**

Blinky; Yow; Terra Bina Kia Jenna; Guzzle; Oops; But, Cake; Archives; The Shadow Of Your Smile; Room Service; I Want A Little Girl; Sandbox; Response; Trunk; Go; Scottie Pippen; Mr. Pretension

Welcome to the land of Joey Baron, Amazing Rhythm Ace. Best known for his work with Bill Frisell, John Zorn, and Carmen McRae, Baron is a marvelous musician with perfectly clean execution, a vast knowledge of drumming styles and rhythms, and a wackily droll sense of humor.

His trio's bubbly (at times annoying) chatter sounds like a Broadway pit orchestra for a Marx Brothers musical. Belches, brawls, carnival stomps, cocktail shmoozes, ethnic dance numbers, some Latin and some "outside" jazz noodling—this is a joyous, vibrant performance masquerading as a nutty party record.

A magician in his youth, Baron handles the subtleties of arcane drumming styles with slight-of-hand ease. "Oops" is a '50s jazz



TV theme gone mad that turns into a raunchy stripper's groove—all suggestive cymbals and nasty tom fills while the horns chug and croon. Other tunes bear the Zorn influence of blazing single-note melodic runs and assorted dissonance. "But, Cake" is full Caribbean mode, with Baron mixing third-line drumming and a propulsive mambo.

Elsewhere, big Bonham beats cross with funky linear grooves; kick-catching buzz rolls meet with Gene Krupa in a cocktail bar; two standards get rolled like a couple of happy drunks; and Baron displays some fine, Shelly Manne-ish brushwork—an original blend of

styles and attitudes.

The music here is challenging, and probably not for everyone. But Baron's obvious drum mastery and the joy he brings to the music should be heard by anyone aspiring to play the instrument well.

•Ken Micallef

### BARKMARKET

#### *Gimmick*

(American 9 45343-2)



**John Nowlin: bs**

**Rock Savage: dr**

**David Sardy: gtr, banjo, vcl**

Easy Chair; Whipping Boy; Static; Dumbjaw; Gatherer; Hack It Off;

Curio; Redundant; Radio Static; Carjack; The Shill; Better Made Man

There was a time when stuff like this could only be heard in your worst childhood nightmares and B-grade slasher films. Now Barkmarket, a Faith No More-ish trio from Brooklyn, New York, is lauded in certain media circles as "years ahead of its time."

*Gimmick*, though, defies the boundary of any given era with a rhythmic, dynamically sensitive mix that's as ingratiating as it is grating. There's a strong sense of song despite Barkmarket's seeming lack of structure, underscored by

drummer Rock Savage, who shows a knack for beautifully setting up the band's explosive if chaotic turns. The drummer goes easily from the punk march of "Static" to the near-groove of "Dumbjaw." His ringy ride and tom playing creates mosh-territory momentum in "Redundant."

Barkmarket might become a guiding light in alternative music, but only if people don't go blind first looking directly into that light.

• Matt Peiken

### DAVID MURRAY QUARTET+1

#### *Fast Life*

(DIW/Columbia CK 57526)

**David Murray,**

**Branford Marsalis: tn sx**

**John Hicks: pno**

**Ray Drummond: bs**

**Idris Muhammad: dr**

Crucificado; Calle Estrella; Fast Life; Luminous; Intuitively; Off Season

This session shows at least two facets of Idris Muhammad's versatility: his easy command of straight-ahead jazz, and his ability to hold things together when the front line tends to play ahead of the beat.

Ligneous rimshots recall the late Ed Blackwell as Muhammad sails through the Latin opening pair. A smartly arranged title track offers a well-built drum solo and inspires some sounds from Branford Marsalis that you probably won't hear on the *Tonight Show*. Smooth transitions between Afro-Cuban 6/8 and suave walking follow John Hicks's balletic lines to a "Luminous" ending. The quaint pop-rock of "Intuitively," complete with politically incorrect (that is, unprocessed) backbeat, little prepares you for the leader's range-finding cadenza, or for the restless closer.

Just as the great Jack DeJohnette sounds out of place on Gary Burton's uncharacteristically scattered *Six Pack*, though, Muhammad perhaps doesn't belong here—whereas antsy Andrew Cyrille is right at home on Murray's earlier *Shakill's Warrior*. We drummers have a hard time saying no.

• **Hal Howland**

## FIGHT War Of Words

(Epic 57372)

**Rob Halford: vcl**

**Russ Parrish, Brian Tilse: gtr, kybd**

**Jay Jay: bs**

**Scott Travis: dr**

Into The Pit; Nailed To The Gun; Life In Black; Immortal Sin; War Of Words; Laid To Rest; For All Eternity; Little Crazy; Contortion; Kill It; Vicious; Reality, A New Beginning

Scott Travis did more than give Judas Priest a jump-start when he joined in 1989. He provided the foundation for Priest front man Rob Halford to build his fledgling solo career. Though *War Of Words* does lit-

tle to distinguish Halford's vision from the melange of Pantera wanna-bes, it does give a glimpse into Travis's immense drumming talent.

Continuous double-kick rolls and ruffs on the opening cut



attest to Travis's stamina and meter, while "Kill It" and "Nailed To The Gun" show off his ability to keep a song moving at foot-stomping pace without running amok. The sounds of the drums, particularly the solid kicks, are also a highlight.

Travis, who proved his musical prowess previously with defunct Los Angeles metallers Racer X, is too often relegated here to simplistic beats. Fans who catch the band on its U.S. club tour, though, will undoubtedly see the 6' 7" double-kick demon stretch his limbs.

• **Matt Peiken**

## ELVIN JONES Very Rare

(Evidence ECD 22053-2)

**Elvin Jones: dr**

**Art Pepper, Frank Foster,**

**Pat La Barbera: sx**

**Roland Hanna: pno**

**Richard Davis, Andy McCloud: bs**

**Roland Prince: gtr**

Sweet Mama; Passion Flower; Zange; Tin Tin Deo; Pitter Pat; The Witching Hour; E.J. Blues; A Love Supreme

Combining tracks from two albums previously available only in Japan on Trio Records,



this release features six tunes recorded in the studio in 1979 with Pepper, Hanna, and Davis, and two extended tunes recorded live in Japan in 1978 with Jones' regular touring band of the time. The first six cuts are interesting enough, displaying Jones' variety of approaches to keeping time, ranging from some fairly straight-ahead ride cymbal work to sections where he rolls and crashes his way through the tune, uses mallets on his toms like a timpanist to propel the music with thundering waves of sound, and uses brushes to caress the time as well as to smack it upside the head.

"Pitter Pat," a duet between Jones and bassist Davis, is a special treat. But it's the two live cuts that best display Jones' unrelenting power as he goads the other musicians during their extended solos. While the players in Elvin's road band won't necessarily make you forget the John Coltrane Quartet's version of "A Love Supreme," Jones' solo on this live version of the first two movements from the piece is a definitive example of his rolling-and-tumbling technique.

• **Rick Mattingly**

## BOOKS DOUBLE HI-HAT EXERCISES FOR THE CONTEMPORARY DRUMMER

by **Chad Wackerman**

Price: \$12.00

For all the remote hi-hats you see on drumkits these days, many drummers are only playing one set at a time. Wackerman's book contains numerous exercises to help develop the ability to integrate two hi-hats into one pattern. The book includes exercises for playing them with just the hands, just the feet (using two feet on two pedals or alternating one foot between both pedals), and using both hands and feet. There are also examples of realistic beats that incorporate dual hi-hats.

The book was designed for a standard hi-hat plus a remote cable hi-hat with pedal, but many of the exercises would work fine with an auxiliary set of hats without a pedal. Having a drop clutch on one or both of the hi-hats could also offer different possibilities in terms of open and closed sounds. Because of the fact that double hi-hat setups are not standardized, Wackerman did not include a lot of written instruction. With some of the exercises, one might wish that there were a few hints in terms of sticking or how to manipulate two pedals. But learning to solve those problems for yourself is an important part of the learning process, and the lack of specific instruction actually helps make the book more adaptable for different setups. (*Wackerman Music, distributed by Drum Workshop, 101 Bernoulli Circle, Oxnard, CA 93030*)

• **Rick Mattingly**

## VIDEOS TERRY BOZZIO

*Melodic Drumming And The Ostinato*

*Volumes One, Two and Three*

Time: approx. 90 min. each

Price: \$40 each



This remarkable three-volume video set does a lot to reinforce the contention that genius consists of 10% inspiration and 90% hard work. Terry Bozzio's creative gifts are very much in evidence throughout these tapes, which contain several lengthy solos rich in melodic content as well

as in technical achievement. There are also short percussion solos interspersed between sections in which Bozzio uses gongs, metal instruments, bells, shakers, and hand drums to display the more sensitive, introspective side of his musical personality.

But if one were only to view the solos, the only seeming explanation for Bozzio's ungodly polyrhythmic complexity would be that he made a midnight deal down at the crossroads. As the instructional material in the videos and accompanying booklets makes clear, however, playing at this level is the result of tremendous discipline and long hours of practice.

So while one can be astounded by the sheer technique displayed in this production, the material is never presented with the attitude that "this is why I'm Terry Bozzio and you're not." Rather, Bozzio makes it all seem quite accessible to anyone willing to

put in the time. He stresses that he worked on these techniques slowly and steadily over months and years. He tells of double bass patterns that he could only do for a few seconds at first because his legs would cramp, and explains a pattern that he is still working on but didn't include in the video because he still clicks his sticks together sometimes while playing it. Somehow you know he's going to eventually get it, and hearing him tell of his own developmental process makes you feel that you can get it too.

Much of the material is based around Bozzio's technique of setting up an ostinato with one to three of his limbs and then soloing against it, a technique originally explained on Bozzio's first video on DCI. Since that time, he has developed the concept to the extremely advanced degree dealt with on these three videos, on which he also

explores related issues such as melodic tom patterns, polyrhythms, and "rudiments from hell"—incredibly difficult sticking patterns Bozzio created by combining various rudiments, giving them names such as "fluffed double paradiddle."

The accompanying booklets have just enough overlapping material that each volume can be used independently, but there is a fairly steady progression in terms of difficulty from one volume to the next, so one would be best served by buying them in order. As Bozzio readily admits, this is not the kind of material that will turn up in the drum part on a hit song played on the radio. This is the purely artistic side of drumming, for which Terry Bozzio has written a new chapter. (*Slam International*, distributed by *Paiste America, Inc.*, 460 Atlas Street, Brea, CA 92621)

• Rick Mattingly



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See pages 68 and 69 in this issue for  
scheduled artists and ticket information.

## THE DRUMMERS OF BASIE

continued from page 35

flashy Harlemitte stayed on. "There was a joke in the band, 'Don't get sick—because by the time you recover you won't have a job,'" former Basie trombonist Benny Powell remembers.

As it turned out, being replaced in the Basie band was a very positive turn of events for Gus Johnson. He immediately began working steadily, building on a high-level reputation. Lena Home, Ella Fitzgerald, Neal Hefti, Woody Herman, Gerry Mulligan, Benny Goodman, Stan Getz, Duke Ellington, Benny Carter, Buck Clayton, and the World's Greatest Jazz Band were among those who hired him. Until he became seriously ill with Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease in 1989 and had to stop playing, Johnson never had to think much about employment.

Why? The late Woody Herman provided the answer in no uncertain terms: "I think Gus Johnson is one of the best 'time' drummers in the world. I treasure him. I don't think Basie ever knew what he had when Gus was with him."

### Sonny Payne

"There was some controversy about Percival 'Sonny' Payne [1926-1979] when he joined the band," Benny Powell points out. "Being Harlem show/jazz drummer Chris Columbus's adopted son, Payne learned a great deal early on about 'the business' and drums. He started playing at about age seven and built a reputation as a showman. He had a well-developed sense of what went over with audiences and performers. Dancing girls loved him. He could catch all their steps and make it easy for them to dance.

"Musicians wondered, 'Well, is he a jazz drummer? Can he play swing?' Right off he proved to us that he could do the job. I loved his playing. He had great spirit. He never let down. Because he was so visual, twirling sticks, bouncing them off curtains or the floor, and stuff like that, a lot of people didn't realize what a good drummer he was."

Payne was larger than life, "Like Sinatra and Napoleon," Powell says. Small in stature, brash, and often brusque, he had a tough-guy, James Cagney exterior. Some

people didn't like him. But "inside he was a really soft guy," the trombonist explains.

Harold Jones, a drummer who played with Basie later on, notes, "Some of the guys in the band were envious and jealous of Sonny's applause and his success with the pretty ladies."

Eddie Jones, Payne's bass-playing buddy in the Basie rhythm section, reports, "Sonny brought new life to the orchestra. He made the music exciting; he added to what it was saying. And he was exciting to watch.

"Sonny was driven. He felt that he should live hard twenty-four hours a day. He never slept, except on the band bus," Jones says. "He loved horseback riding," Powell recalls. "Early one morning, he got on a trans-Atlantic flight wearing his red band jacket and jodhpurs. He had gone from the job to the stables. What a picture that made! It broke up the guys in the band."

"Payne," as most of Basie's players called him, was quite serious about playing and loved it more than was immediately apparent. British critic Max Jones wrote in the London *Melody Maker*, "He loved



## Sound Advice.

**I**t's a fact. Every time you hit your drums, whether you're practicing, rehearsing, recording or performing, unless you protect yourself you're doing irreparable damage to your hearing. So, here's some sound advice from master-drummer Terry Bozzio on how to play it safe and take care of your ears: • Don't wait until you have a hearing loss, tinnitus or other problems to protect yourself. • Put something between you and your sound; use approved hearing protection whenever you play or listen to loud music. • Have your hearing checked regularly and remember that a hearing loss is both permanent and preventable.

# DRUMMING

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drumming, loved the music, and seemed to me to love life. He often spoke of the show-biz flash accusations: 'I believe you should be able to sell your instrument. This is show business, we're not playing chamber music.'

Payne made clear his roots in other interviews. He always mentioned his stepfather, Vic Berton (the great percussionist who helped get him started playing drums), and Chick Webb. Buddy Rich was one of his primary enthusiasms. He admired Louie Bellson, Art Blakey, and Roy Haynes as well.

I never got to know Payne. But I spent a lot of time listening and watching the Basie band when he was providing it with strong rhythmic impetus (1955-1965, 1973-1974). I recall many a night and early morning at Birdland, numerous one-nighters, festivals—and one particular evening at the Glen Island Casino in suburban New Rochelle, twenty-five miles from Broadway. Payne gave one of his best performances at that famed Westchester County site for big bands. He made a lot of music and lit an unrelenting fire that night—and, in addition, gave a great show.

I came away from the experience almost totally converted to his cause.

Sure, he sometimes rushed and the guys in the band sometimes had to rein him in. But no doubt about it, he was a phenomenon of nature that made your pulse race and raised your spirits to a level of pure enthusiasm.

When Mosaic, a company in Stamford, CT, run by people who love jazz, put out *The Complete Roulette Live Recordings Of Count Basie And His Orchestra (1959-1962)*, I had the chance to re-evaluate Payne's work, without the distractions of all the flash. No doubt about it, he related very well to the Basie band. He had his own "feel" and rhythmic identity. He knew what to do on the slow, medium, and fast blues-drenched material. His breaks and solos were positive, fitting, and often quite original. Try his feature, "Old Man River," from the upcoming Mosaic package of all the Basie studio recordings made for Roulette. Though not a technical wizard—he relied on single-stroke variations rather than mixing and mingling rudiments—Payne undeniably made his point.

While listening to the upcoming Mosaic

release of the live performances, I came to realize a key fact: Payne brought a more modern rhythmic conception to the band. His work had its foundation in swing. But what he played behind the band and soloists reveals he'd been listening to the modern drummers. Indeed he made contemporary ideas work well within the Basie context.

Not trained, Payne couldn't read music when he became a member of the Basie band. He slowly developed this ability as he went along, with the help of colleagues. His instinct told him what to do—the music spoke to him and he responded.

Payne played with a variety of people during his career—Earl Bostic, Tiny Grimes, Hot Lips Page, Lucille Dixon, and the Erskine Hawkins orchestra, among others—prior to becoming a Basie-ite. After a decade with "The Chief," he worked with Harry James' band for a number of years, returned to Basie, appeared with Frank Sinatra, and drummed with a few small groups here and abroad.

Payne was brought down by his need to keep going around the clock. "I think he just ran himself into the ground. That's



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why he passed," Eddie Jones says. His mother, Carol Payne, explained that he refused to take it seriously when he became ill. He died of "a heart condition aggravated by complications," *Daily Variety* reported.

"I was at his funeral in Los Angeles, and there were more Cadillacs parked out front than there are at General Motors," Benny Powell recalls. "Sure, there were musicians and show people there. But that fast crowd he had hung out with—pimps and hustlers, for lack of more polite descriptives—was responsible for all that flash and glitter. There was such a festive atmosphere I expected Sonny to get up and join the party."

### Harold Jones

Harold Jones (1940- ) joined the band a bit over a year after Payne left—on Christmas Eve of 1967. "I flew in to replace Rufus 'Speedy' Jones at the Riverboat club in New York City," Jones recalls. "Harlan Floyd, a Basie trombone player, got me on the band."

"Basie needed someone to come right away who could read and do what had to

be done. I stayed five years the first time, returning later for a tour with Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald. After that, I went back for a couple of weeks when Basie needed me."

A modernist by orientation, having been heavily influenced by Max Roach and Art Blakey during his developmental years, Jones worked with a variety of jazz people in his home state of Indiana, including trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, guitar wizard Wes Montgomery, and instrumentalist-composer David Baker. When Jones moved to Chicago at age eighteen, he further diversified, playing with, among others, jazz saxophonists Gene Ammons, Eddie Harris, Bunky Green, and Sonny Stitt, bluesman Roosevelt Sykes, pop pianist Roger Williams, and saxophonist-composer-bandleader Paul Winter—with whom he first played the White House and the bossa nova.

Once on the Basie band, Jones simplified his playing, drawing away a bit from the freer, somewhat contrapuntal style of bebop. Though he integrated some techniques from the modern idiom, he felt the band sounded better when he used the

drum patterns and the basic style that have been associated with Basie over the years.

According to Jones, the Basie association "was so very important to my career." He says, "I couldn't have learned half as much anywhere else. The Basie band was my university. The musicians in the band were great. Alumni like Jo Jones frequently came around and gave advice. You discovered new things almost every night."

"Sam Nestico, our chief arranger, was a big asset. His melodic, rhythmic charts had the simplicity that Basie liked. Anything he wrote allowed the band to breathe and swing. I loved to play Sammy's things because they're natural, easy to feel, and don't lock you in."

"As for Basie, he was a master of simplicity, an expert at making music, and a great editor," Jones says. "He knew how to handle musicians and cater to egos while still being a strong, responsible, likeable leader."

"Basie quietly passed on important information with just a few words. He taught me about time, economy, how to react to music. He showed me how to really play well in a big band."

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A musician with training, Jones first studied with Jack Kurkowski in his hometown, Richmond, Indiana, then with James Dutton at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, on scholarship. Music obsessed him; he practiced and played all the time as a younger man, often not remembering to eat.

Jones' great love for music remains apparent in his work. High-level, natural ability and his more scholastic side blend—one enhancing the other. Certain recordings with Basie, particularly the hard-to-get Dot LPs *Basie/Straight Ahead* and *Standing Ovation*—the latter featuring music of the three eras of Basie, recorded live at the Tropicana in Las Vegas—show what Jones can do.

The easygoing, cheerful Harold Jones combines elements of Jo Jones, Gus Johnson, and Sonny Payne with his own way of doing things. He achieves a tricky balance, controlling pulsation while retaining a sense of freedom and flow. He knows when to withdraw and support and when to charge into the foreground. His solos and breaks have an improvisatory, spontaneous quality. They ask for and hold your atten-

tion. They talk to you rather than upsetting your equilibrium.

Jones is a firm, swinging player and a good listener. He does his job without undue sweat and show business. *Standing Ovation* gives you the most telling view of his talent. Try Freddie Green's "Down For Double." Clearly Jones had become an integral part of the Basie sound. His effectiveness, consistency, and overall ability motivated Basie to say to veteran critic Leonard Feather, "A great drummer can mean everything to a band. Harold has really pulled us together."

Jones moved on to excellent and steady employment after leaving Basie. He performed with Sarah Vaughan (for ten years), Benny Carter's band, Nancy Wilson, Joe Williams, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald, the Harry James band, and others. Currently he is associated with singer Natalie Cole.

#### Butch Miles

Musicians and critics are seldom in accord. But after Butch Miles (1944- ) joined the Basie band in late January of 1975—first to sub for Ray Parello, who

had been in an auto accident, then as his replacement—he made a major impression on both.

Buddy Rich helped Miles get the job by putting in a good word for "the kid" with Basie. And Buddy quietly checked Miles' progress. Unlike Mel Torme, the drummer's employer for three and a half years, who raved about him, Rich occasionally made harsh assessments of Miles' talent. Buddy felt he played too much like him and would profit by seeking more original means of expressing himself.

When I first heard Miles with Torme and the Al Porcino Big Band at the Maisonette of New York's St. Regis Hotel in the early '70s, I wasn't swept away. But soon thereafter I began to adjust my opinion. The Atlantic recording of Torme's performance at the Maisonette was released, and I found what Miles did was quite helpful to the singer. His work with Basie also more than suggested that this drummer could well be very important in his particular area of playing.

"Like virtuoso Rich, a man he greatly admires, Butch Miles has a forceful playing personality, performing much as Buddy

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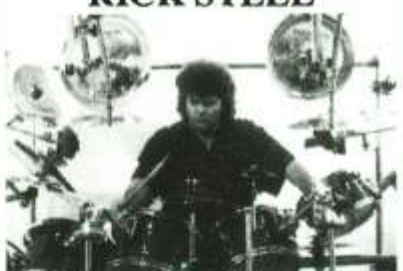
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does—in a virile and explosive, highly coordinated, dramatic, and most pulsating manner," I said in an article written for *International Musician*. "As a member of the Basie jazz machine, he brought a sense of swagger to the band's rhythm. He consistently fired the ensemble and its soloists, while adding color and strength to the band's offerings. This enabled him to stand up to the inevitable comparisons with the royalty of the drums, like Jo Jones, Gus Johnson, Sonny Payne, and Shadow Wilson."

Butch Miles was still developing during the Basie years. He hadn't found himself. However, two key New York critics, John S. Wilson (*The New York Times*) and Richard Sudhalter (*The New York Post*) were much more unequivocal than I. Wilson said Miles was "one of the most colorful and imaginative drummers the [Basie] band has had." Sudhalter asserted that Miles "plays about the most rewarding time of any drummer in his stylistic territory."

Buck Clayton, the legendary Basie trumpeter and arranger, told me on several occasions that he felt Miles "fits the band

better than anyone since Jo left." Basie favored the drummer, and musicians in and out of the band were complimentary. There were some musical people, however, who sided with Buddy Rich, saying Miles had to look deeper within himself for answers.

The Basie experience, according to Miles, was truly memorable. "There I was, traveling all over the world," he explains, "being around people I'd only heard about, playing with musicians I had always admired. And learning all the time."

"Basie was like my father," he went on. "A lenient man, he allowed the guys to do their thing without getting in the way. He treated us like professionals. He encouraged me to be free and take hold. 'Kick the band in the ass,' he kept saying."

Miles indicates everything stemmed from Basie—how to play a phrase, a break, the entire arrangement. "He controlled everything from the piano. He might be sitting there with a cigar and looking as if he was about to fall asleep. But he was in charge all the time. All the guys responded to Basie and put it on the line for him."

An excellent sample of Miles with Basie can be found on the Pablo CD, *Fun Time*,

recorded live at the Montreux Festival in 1975. The title tune and "Whirly Bird," both by Neal Hefti, are full of fire. Listen as well to how he deals with the slow blues feeling on shouter Bill Caffey's vehicle, "I Hate You Baby." Still another worthy, well-developed Miles performance with the Basie band can be heard on "Sweet Georgia Brown," as arranged by Sam Nestico (*Prime Time*, Pablo). On all these, Miles draws you to him and utilizes his gifts in a most convincing manner.

In July of 1979, Miles left the Basie band "to try other things." Since then, he has remained busy, playing with Dave Brubeck, Tony Bennett, Benny Goodman, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Gerry Mulligan, Lena Home, Joe Bushkin, Bob Wilber, and others. He also teaches and gives clinics here and abroad.

### Duffy Jackson

"When Butch put in his notice, Basie gave me seven months to prepare to come on the band," Duffy Jackson (1954- ) remembers. "During that time, I did my homework. I studied recordings of various editions of the Basie band—from the 1930s

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through the 1970s—digging *all* the drummers and the changes in the band's style. I wanted to really *know* how Jo, Shadow, Gus Johnson, Sonny Payne, and the others phrased and kicked the band—how they swung. To complete my education, I listened to the 1970s band live whenever I could."

Jackson came to his first Basie gig in mid-August, 1979, with a double bass drumset. He wanted "to move the band away from the Butch Miles/Buddy Rich feeling and re-establish the Shadow Wilson/Gus Johnson groove." Jackson adds, "I tried to give the pulse an edge and keep things happy. It didn't take long before I realized that the drummer with Basie has to be strong and get in there, not be pussy-footin'. If you lay back, the band runs you over."

"I feel it's my job to swing the band, to accompany people and bring out the best in them," he explains. "I'm not really into drum solos."

Jackson remained with the Basie ensemble for eleven months. "Basie was very kind and gave me free range to express myself," Jackson says. "The man taught me so much about swinging. He didn't have to say anything about music; he'd just look at me in a certain way. And I'd know what to do."

Jackson credits legendary Basie acoustic guitarist Freddie Green with being exceedingly wise about the pulse. "Give each beat its full value," the Basie veteran insisted.

"It was a great opportunity, being with the band," the drummer says. "I've been quite fortunate. Louie Bellson, a great friend and musical influence, got me a job with Lena Home when I was eighteen. I played with Sammy Davis at twenty. I've been shown how it's done by masters. Playing with Lionel Hampton, Illinois Jacquet, Dizzy Gillespie, Monty Alexander, my dad—bassist/bandleader Chubby Jackson—taught me so much about drumming and how to be comfortable and compatible with musicians. Dancer Steve Condos was another great teacher."

Stylistically Jackson combines elements of the swing and bop drum styles, mixing them most appropriately. His "time" generally feels good. "I want people to feel the beat," he says. Feel it on *Kansas City Shout*, a Basie Pablo CD showcasing the

band and blues singers Joe Turner and Eddie Vinson. Feel it on Illinois Jacquet's Atlantic LP, *Jacquet's Got It*. Jackson plays for the band, sustaining the ensemble and uplifting soloists, applying lessons in selflessness learned from Dave Tough.

### Gregg Field

Gregg Field (1956- ) says, "I got the call to replace Duffy in July 1980. I had been playing with the Harry James band in and around Los Angeles. The Basie band had a lot of older, very experienced guys and made its own particular set of demands on the drummer. It was not like going to work with the Stan Kenton or Woody Herman bands, where you worked with guys essentially your own age."

"I remember my first night, in Detroit; we opened with 'Splanky,' a Neal Hefti thing that starts off with some muted brass and saxophones. When we got to the shout chorus and the band came in, I was shocked at its *power, force, and volume*. I reacted strongly, opening up as I seldom had before."

Like most other drummers of the later years, Field came to the band a devoted

fan, anxious to learn and make the music work. Basie had been his favorite since childhood. Gregg had been overwhelmed by the band at age ten, even sat in with it as a teenager. As far as he was concerned, Sonny Payne, and particularly Harold Jones, got to the heart of the matter.

"Harold Jones is such an amazing drummer," Field told Robyn Flans in an illuminating *MD* interview. "He's been one of my favorites since I heard the Basie band. He has a unique feel that creates such a strong rhythmic sense. I've never heard anybody get it to that level, and he does it effortlessly."

A thoughtful young man, Field approaches his work in a manner that combines spontaneity and organization. He constantly evaluates the efforts of other drummers as well as his own. He has learned the value of self-editing and simplicity. During his almost three years with Basie, he became increasingly involved with the drum tradition of the band. Field admires Jo Jones and Shadow Wilson and has rapport with the ways and means of Gus Johnson, but emerges out of what Payne, Jones, and Miles brought to Basie.

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"I think we got the style from one another," Field says. "As different as Sonny, Harold, Butch, and I play, you can hear a certain drumming tradition in what we do. I come from Louie Bellson and Buddy Rich. But more and more I learn from Sonny Payne."

"Sonny showed us, particularly toward the end of his stay with the band, that the *music* tells you what to do. He played less and less, allowing the music to come through. Listen to him with Basie on *Sinatra At The Sands* (Reprise). The track that really shows you where he was going is 'Street Of Dreams.' Sonny allowed Sinatra's vocal to work by laying back, not getting in the way."

Field contends that muscle-flexing is a great temptation for a drummer. A lot of arrangements entice the person behind the set to overplay. Fortunately this is something he seldom does. He is direct, pulsating from within; he favors restraint and good sense over tiresome flash.

Field learned in the Ray Charles band to consider the entire musical picture when playing a composition or arrangement. With Basie, his schooling continued. He

took Freddie Green's advice about not pulling or pushing the tempo and playing in the center of the melody. With Ella Fitzgerald, he found out how to work with large, sometimes unwieldy orchestras with little or no understanding of jazz. With Frank Sinatra, he has found what he deems "the perfect gig." The late Irv Cottier, who really laid it down for so many years for America's greatest performer, is his model.

Stan Levey, an innovative, veteran drummer and a discerning observer, says, "The kid is something! A time player with chops, he did well with Basie. But he's really into it now. Sinatra is crazy about him. As much as he loved Irv Cottier, Sinatra loves this kid—really *loves* him. Gregg's got more chops than Irv did. He can do more things."

Field's most expressive work in the Basie idiom was not done with the band he traveled with for almost three years, nor with the Basie "ghost" bands he subbed with briefly in 1986 and 1988. He is at his best on *Dear Mr. Basie*, the live Concord CD of the Frank Wess-Harry Edison Orchestra, recorded at the Fujitsu-Concord Jazz festival in Japan in 1989.

The drummer is clearly motivated by his colleagues—all of whom are on intimate terms with this sort of music. They include such Basie veterans as saxophonist-flutist Wess, the unmistakable "Sweets" Edison, Joe Newman, and Snooky Young in the trumpet section, trombonists Benny Powell and Grover Mitchell, saxophonist Marshall Royal, and bassist Eddie Jones, among others.

Field locks in with the rhythm section on the up-tempo opener "Jumpin' At The Woodside," proving how well he can play in this style. It is his contention that "If the rhythm section is in place, then everything can build on top of that." His time is fluid and inspiring. He plays accents in places in the chart where they do the most good. Field doesn't over-extend himself, as he might have in his early days with Basie.

Gregg Field has a great future before him. He's into all kinds of music. He's a record producer, a session player, a teacher—a person who remains open to all possibilities.

### Dennis Mackrel

Dennis Mackrel (1962- ) was the last drummer to work alongside the great man.

Recommended to Basie by singer Joe Williams, he was only twenty when he came on board in January of 1983.

"I was young and green; there were a lot of things I didn't know," Mackrel recalls. "It was a little difficult at the beginning. Grover Mitchell, the lead trombone player, was my tutor. He made suggestions and things got easier and easier. And, of course, Basie was great."

Mackrel, a child prodigy, has been playing drums since the age of two. A professional musician at ten, with an interest in other instruments and writing as well, he was drumming in showroom orchestras in Las Vegas at eighteen, while attending the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. A year later, he moved to New York. "Before I got the Basie job, I did everything from Broadway shows to big bands to funk bands," he says.

The drummer wanted to leave a mark on the Basie band, rather than repeating what had been done by those who preceded him in the drum chair. "Basie told me to develop at my own rate. If I made a mistake, he'd look the other way and wouldn't make anything out of it. He and Grover were so positive; I worked all the harder to justify their faith in me."

Basie spoke to Mackrel only once about style and what he had to do in the band. At the drummer's first rehearsal, the band-leader suggested he keep an eye on him for cues and learn to play the bass drum. Mackrel researched the bass drum. He soon realized how very important it was to the rhythmic foundation the Basie band needed, and to jazz drumming as a whole.

"I don't want to sound dramatic," he says. "But coming to terms with the bass drum and what it can do changed my life as a musician."

Mackrel viewed his job with Basie as "mostly punctuation, putting icing on the cake. The band had its own sense of pulsation," he explains. "There wasn't much of a need to be the center of control as you might think. What I did depended on what we were playing. There were times when it was necessary to be the dominant influence. There were times when it was necessary to be freer and permit the band to flow. Most of the time, though, the band was very much like a very sophisticated, large aircraft that flies itself."

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the last edition of the band under the piquant pianist's leadership. He insists he played to fit the band's style, did "what was required." That is true to an extent. But *how* he played with Basie had more to do with *him* than the band's history and its drummers throughout the years.

Try *Fancy Pants* (Pablo) with Basie, and the 1986 LP, *Long Live The Chief* (Denon), when Mackrel was in the band under Frank Foster's leadership. Mackrel disappears into a band when ease and steadiness are primary; he moves into the foreground when he has points to make. His comments

and solos emphasize musical content and have a direct relationship with the music's message and architecture. His style, unlike that of most drummers who have worked with Basie, has little to do with rudiments and the military roots of jazz drumming.

"Where I come from has *everything* to do with my approach," Mackrel responds. "My influences were Art Blakey, Max Roach, Grady Tate, Mel Lewis. I grew up listening to bebop. I never formally studied drums. That also had its effect on my playing. I don't feel I have to follow very specific rules, other than making the music work."

Since his "highly educational" stay with the Basie bands, Dennis Mackrel has progressed as expected. He has worked as a drummer and composer/arranger, covering a wide stylistic range. A partial list of his credits includes the Woody Herman Thundering Herd, the Grover Mitchell Orchestra, The Benny Carter Orchestra, the McCoy Tyner Big Band, the Buck Clayton Swing Band, the WDR Radio Big Band (Cologne, Germany), pianists Hank Jones and Marian McPartland, and performers Joe Williams, Caterina Valente, Cab Galloway, Diane Schuur, and others.

### A Final Word

There were other drummers who set the pace for the Count. Some were around for a while; others only briefly. The gentlemen treated in this essay were not arbitrarily selected. Careful consideration preceded their inclusion. Each brought to Basie something of his own. Each grew in the job. The pioneers, Jo Jones and Shadow Wilson, showed how it could be done. Those who followed carried on the tradition, with variations basic to personal vision and style.

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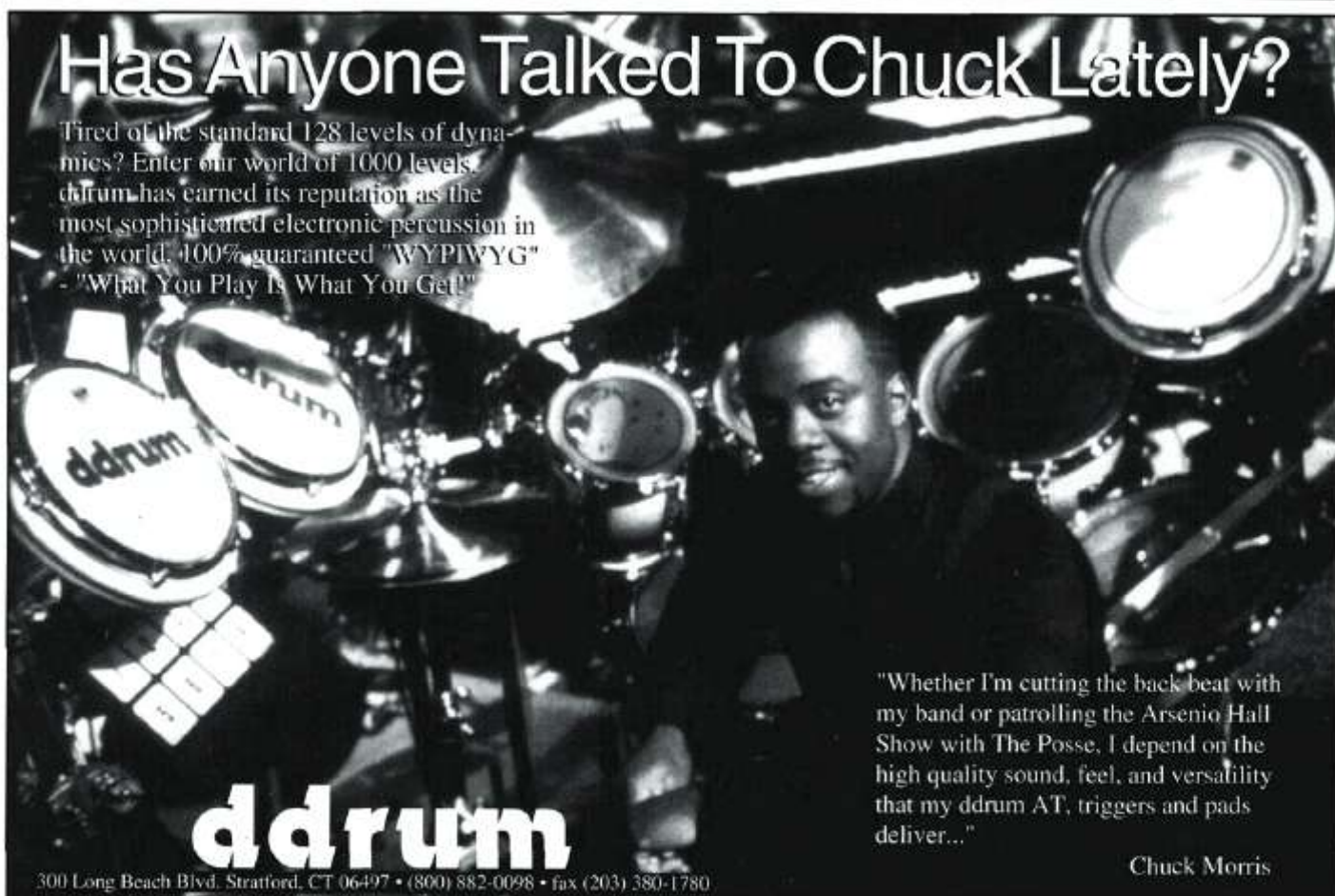
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**Chuck Morris**

# Magic Moments

by Ron Hefner

The well-rehearsed band prepares for another night in a club where they have a long-running engagement. The bandmembers greet each other casually, making small talk as they go through the familiar routine of setting up the equipment, tuning up, and doing a brief sound check. They decide to begin the first set with one of their usual warm-up numbers. Somebody counts off the tune, and by the end of the first chorus grins appear on the musicians' faces as they realize this is going to be one of those "magic" nights. The music is perfect, seamless; the players are so totally attuned to each other it's almost as if they have ESP. One musician plays a figure, another echoes it flawlessly. And the time is so *right*, it seems to carry the musicians along—almost as if the music is playing itself.

Incredibly, the magic seems to feed on itself and things get even better as the night goes on. By the end of the gig, everyone is aglow with the satisfaction of a job well done. All is right with the world!

The following night, the players again assume their positions on the bandstand. Bolstered by the previous night's success, they confidently launch into the first tune. This time, things sound good, but not *great*. The "magic" has mysteriously vaporized: The solos fall short of being inspired, and though the time is good, it seems to have lost the momentum it had the night before. The musicians, astute professionals that they are, get through the night without a hitch—even eliciting compliments from the listeners. But nobody's smiling like they were the previous night.

Why?

If I knew the answer to that question, I'd bottle the information and sell it. The truth is, the formula for "magic" in music is an alchemistic one: Certain ingredients are mystical and unidentifiable. However, there *are* aspects to playing that, if prudently sought, will definitely increase the probability of those "magic" moments.

First and foremost is group commitment. Working with other musicians comprises a relationship—one that, like any relationship, requires nurturing if it is to survive and flourish. Any kind of personal agenda will minimize the impact of the music, simply because playing music is a collective enterprise. Everyone must work together in a common purpose.

We've all had the experience of working with musicians who tend to dominate everything. These types seem compelled to play the most notes possible, at the loudest volume, without regard for the overall effect on the music. Avoid such players like the plague!

There ought to be a battlefield someplace where these people can go and participate in an eternal "cutting" contest.

At the other end of the spectrum is the player who is basically disinterested, contributing as little as possible, watching the clock, and generally running on "auto pilot." Of course musicians sometimes take gigs for little more than economic reasons, and it's easy to fall into an indifferent state of mind in such situations. I've done it myself—and subsequently found it to be poisonous: It infiltrated every aspect of my life, on and off the bandstand. It's also contagious and will surely infect the other players.

Listening is another essential ingredient of the "magic" formula.

Consider this: It's possible to hear and not listen. You hear the other player's notes, but are you listening to what they are *saying*? What kind of emotion are they expressing? What kind of mood are they trying to create—and what can you do to embellish it?

Listening must also be a cooperative effort. It's a tough job to focus your concentration on a player who is out in oblivion somewhere, only listening to himself. If everybody listens to *each other*, a lot more "feedback" will result.

The drummer, in many ways, must have the most acute listening skills. Surrounded by ringing cymbals and booming toms, it's sometimes difficult to clearly hear the other players. A well-placed monitor can sometimes make a difference, even on a relatively quiet gig.

Finally, how about a little compliance? I'll address this one specifically to drummers: Every room is different acoustically; drummers must be sensitive and modify either their touch or tuning in order to achieve a blend with the other players. What sounds good from behind the drums may sound horrendous out front and

elsewhere on the bandstand. When in doubt, ask!

Drummers should support and inspire. If another player is into a ferocious solo, it's not always best to try to match his or her ferocity! Conversely, sometimes the other players will take a sparse approach and leave a lot of space. Does this mean the drummer should jump in and fill it all up—or minimize? It depends on the situation. Be attentive to the other players; you'll hear what to do. The ultimate goal is to make them sound good, which will in turn make *you* sound good.

If all concerned have an awareness of the importance of commitment, listening, and compliance, the stage has been set for the "spirits" to descend and sprinkle their fairy dust on the bandstand. But if those spirits stubbornly refuse to show up on a given night and those "magic" moments don't occur, at least everybody can say they *tried*—and the music will sound better for it.

"The formula for 'magic' in music is an alchemistic one: Certain ingredients are mystical and unidentifiable."



# Al Foster

by Mark Griffith

*The purpose of this department is to bring your attention to recordings that exemplify the work of major drumming artists. With the information presented here, you'll be able to hear how such drummers evolved personally, as well as how they influenced those who followed.*

Al Foster's musicality, creativity, and simplicity make him one of the most enjoyable drummers to watch and listen to today. Although perhaps best known for his seminal work with Miles Davis in the '70s and '80s, Al can be heard today playing at jazz clubs and festivals with saxophonists Joe Henderson and Sonny Rollins. It is there that you can witness his unique drumming techniques—techniques that come from an open mind and from listening to the music around him, rather than from years of lessons and hours of practice.

The majority of Al's style comes from the traditional history of jazz drumming. His time concept comes out of Arthur Taylor and Louis Hayes. His solo ideas and brush playing are reminiscent of the great Max Roach and Billy Higgins. When Al plays a Latin-tinged groove we're immediately reminded of the funky mambos played by Art Blakey. Mix all of this with the explosiveness of Elvin Jones, and you have just the beginnings of Al Foster. From there, Al has put his own twists on the tradition. He has developed many original techniques, sounds, and approaches throughout his career.

We'll begin by looking at Al's first record: Blue Mitchell's *The Thing To Do*. This record paired youngsters Al Foster and Chick Corea with past and present members of the great Horace Silver band, of which Blue was previously a member. This record shows the simplicity in Al's playing. His precise timekeeping is impeccably swinging, while his solos utilize many of the patterns Max Roach had played years before. Listen to the Latin "Fungi Mama" for Al's simplistic timekeeping and a very succinct, organized solo. He was young and had not yet developed many of the trademark characteristics that would later become part of his unique sound.

In the mid-'70s, Al's career took a bit of a turn. He joined the Miles Davis band, which was playing psychedelic open-ended jazz, with definite Jimi Hendrix and Sly & the Family Stone influences. This era spawned many live records recently re-released on CBS. The best of these—*Pangaea*—is comprised of only two songs, each over forty minutes in length. Each tune moves through many sections, and every member of the vast instrumentation gets to solo with the tight rhythm section of Foster and electric bassist Michael Henderson. The grooves are



deep and very contagious.

When Miles re-emerged in the '80s with a new concept and a new band, Foster was the mainstay. This music was more arranged, more approachable, and, at times, more commercial. The band now included bassist Marcus Miller. He and Foster provided the base for a tighter, funkier style of Miles Davis music. This point of Foster's (and Miles') career provided many records, the most important of which are the landmark *Decoy*, the highly aggressive *Star People*, and the live recording *We Want Miles*.

After his long association with Miles, Foster turned from his straight 8th-note groove playing to more traditional jazz. A previous association with bassist Sam Jones and saxophonist Dexter Gordon now produced the Dexter Gordon record *Biting The Big Apple*. At this point in Foster's career you can hear his ride cymbal patterns starting to loosen up, and he begins to play more broken time. The overall time feel of this record is in stark contrast to the earlier Blue Mitchell recording. Yet on both recordings Foster's right hand almost never leaves his ride cymbal. He often creates the illusion of having three hands, keeping one on his ride cymbal at all times. Al's splashing hi-hat (a Foster trademark) and ordered explosiveness (providing great dynamic contrast) also begin to come to the forefront at this time. His subtle but strong timekeeping and more involved comping are augmented by thunder and lightning accents, as well as an added sense of aggressiveness not found earlier in his career.

In the late '70s and early '80s, Foster can be found accompany-

ing saxist Dave Liebman on two records: *Quest* and *Pendulum*. These records are harder-edged and much more aggressive than the Dexter Gordon recording. Foster's drumming seems to open up in Liebman's freer musical atmosphere. During this time, Foster also played on McCoy Tyner's *4x4*, a recording that has Al, bassist Cecil McBee, and McCoy supporting four very different soloists: Arthur Blythe, Freddie Hubbard, Bobby Hutcherson, and John Abercrombie. The versatility of the rhythm section is the highlight here.

Later in the '80s, Al played in the piano trio of Tommy Flannagan. This trio produced the records *The Magnificent Tommy Flannagan*, *Nights At The Vanguard*, and *Giant Steps*, the latter a collection of John Coltrane compositions. Al's taste and musicality are what endear him to many pianists employing the trio setting. He can also be heard on trio records by Hank Jones, Kenny Barron, Dave Kikoski, and Steve Kuhn.

### Tracking Them Down

Here's a list of the albums mentioned in this month's column, including label and catalog information. Following the list are several sources you might want to check for hard-to-find releases.

Blue Mitchell: *The Thing To Do*, Blue Note CDP 784178. Miles Davis: *Pangaea*, Columbia C2K46115; *Decoy*, Columbia CK38991; *Star People*, Columbia FC38657; *We Want Miles*, Columbia C238005. Dexter Gordon: *Biting The Big Apple*, Steeplechase SCS1080. Dave Liebman: *Quest*, Palo Alto PA8061; *Pendulum*, Artists House AH8. McCoy Tyner: *4x4*, Milestone M55007. Tommy Flannagan: *Magnificent Tommy Flannagan*, Progressive PCD7059; *Giant Steps*, *Homage To John Coltrane*, Enja 79646. Joe Henderson: *State Of The Tenor*, Blue Note CDP746296; *State Of The Tenor Vol. 2*, Blue Note CDP76426; *An Evening With Joe Henderson*, Red CD123215; *The Standard Joe*, Red RR123248. McCoy Tyner: *New York Reunion*, Chesky 51. Steve Khan: *Let's Call This*, Bluemoon 79168. Frank Morgan: *Yardbird Suite*, Contemporary 14045. Randy Brecker: *In The Idiom*, Passport PJ88039. Joe Henderson: *So Near So Far*, Verve 314517674.


*Tower Records Mail Order*, (800) 648-4844; *J&R Music World Mail Order*, (800) 221-8180; *Audiophile Imports*, (410) 628-7601; *Third St. Jazz And Rock*, (800) 486-8745; *Rick Ballard Imports*, P.O. Box 5063, Dept. DB, Berkeley, CA 94705; *Double Time Jazz*, P.O. Box 1244, New Albany, IN 47151.

Since the late '80s, saxophonist Joe Henderson has called on Al for a number of saxophone trio records with bassists Ron Carter, Charlie Haden, and Rufus Reid. The introspective *State Of The Tenor Vol. 1* has Al playing lots of brushes. The surefooted *Volume 2* has Al providing support with understated aggressiveness. The elasticity, angularity, and freedom of *An Evening With...* provides a strong contrast to the previous recordings, while *The Standard Joe* splits the difference.

Other spectacular recordings that Al has played on are McCoy Tyner's *New York Reunion*, Steve Khan's *Let's Call This*, Frank Morgan's *Yardbird Suite*, Randy Brecker's *In The Idiom*, and Joe Henderson's *So Near So Far*.


By listening to these records you begin to get a feeling for how Al Foster uses signature sounds, different textures, a boundless sense of humor, total independence, and a wealth of taste and musicality to create beautiful music.







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# Sight-Reading Made Easy

by Emil Richards

The composition we'll look at this month is an example of how sight-reading in the studio has become more difficult in recent years. I would like to explain some ways to make sight-reading a bit easier.

First, we must all instruct music copyists to our needs. In the L.A. studios, we've urged them to put a list of all the instruments that are included in the composition at the upper left-hand corner of the first page. Note Example 9M3. We can see that there are six players, the instruments each player will have to set up, and the instruments used for the particular cue. Note that player #1 is missing. That's because the part for this cue was for timpani, so the timpanist got a separate sheet.

Note also that when there is a time signature change (as in measures 8, 22, or 49), not only is the new time signature placed in the bar where it appears, but also on the end of the preceding bar when that bar appears at the end of a line.

Multiple repeat bars can be a killer, so we instruct copyists to put as few repeat bars in as possible. This particular composition should also have had separate parts written. When you are sight-reading parts 4 and 5 (which appear on the same line) at a tempo of quarter note=160, it's very difficult to go from one line to two lines (at bar 8), to three lines (at bar 42), back to two lines (at bar 58), and so on. By having copyists make separate parts, we can eliminate a lot of these pitfalls in sight-reading.

In the introduction to my new book, *Essential Sight-Reading*, I state, "Sight-reading is not a gift, but a skill that can be learned and developed. There are two skills that are essential to improving your sight-reading. The first is *sight-singing*. By being able to actually sing and pre-hear what is written, you will be able to internalize the music, and your sight-reading will become more fluid and confident. The second is *theoretical analysis*. Your ability to quickly analyze and mentally process the music will help to increase your speed and accuracy.

Sight-reading is the synthesis of a variety of skills and knowledge. When I see a new piece of music, I always approach it in a systematic way. First I glance over it to identify familiar phrases and patterns. Then I put my focus on any new or unusual phrases, rhythms, or groupings that require special attention and more concentration to play. You should condition yourself to be able to mentally hear and conceptualize the music before you actually play it.

A good practice routine to get into is to read at least one new piece of music every day. I encourage you to look over the compositions I include in my articles, sight-sing the notes and rhythms, and analyze and process the music. There is no substitute for hard work, but these tips can make sight-reading much easier for you.

## PERCUSSION

1. CHIMES - BASS DRUM - TAM TAM
3. SUS. CYM. - FIELD DRUM
4. SNARE DRUM
5. FIELD DRUM
6. PIANO

9 M 3

Handwritten musical score for "The Field" by John Cage. The score is written on five systems of staves, each with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, rests, and dynamic markings. The score is divided into sections by bracketed numbers and labels:

- Section 1:** Labeled "1 CHANGES" and "TO: BASS DRUM". It features a bass drum part on the first staff and a field part on the second staff. The field part includes notes marked with "50", "51", "52", and "53".
- Section 2:** Labeled "2 B.D." and "TO: FIELD DRUM (SQUARES ARE)". It features a field part on the first staff and a bass drum part on the second staff. The field part includes notes marked with "54", "55", "56", and "57".
- Section 3:** Labeled "3 B.D." and "TO: CHANGES". It features a field part on the first staff and a bass drum part on the second staff. The field part includes notes marked with "58", "59", "60", and "61".
- Section 4:** Labeled "4 B.D." and "TO: CHANGES". It features a field part on the first staff and a bass drum part on the second staff. The field part includes notes marked with "62", "63", "64", and "65".
- Section 5:** Labeled "5 B.D." and "TO: CHANGES". It features a field part on the first staff and a bass drum part on the second staff. The field part includes notes marked with "66", "67", "68", and "69".

The score is written in ink on a white background. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, rests, and dynamic markings. The score is divided into sections by bracketed numbers and labels. The overall style is minimalist and experimental, characteristic of Cage's work.

Handwritten musical score for "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. The score is written on ten systems of staves. Each system includes a vocal line (SUS CON) and a guitar line (SUS CON). The guitar line is written in 4/4 time and includes various musical notations such as chords, scales, and dynamics. The vocal line is written in 4/4 time and includes lyrics. The score is handwritten and appears to be a personal or working draft.

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# Highlights Of PASIC '93

Columbus, Ohio

November 10-13

Try to imagine nearly 4,000 drummers and percussionists coming together to learn and share ideas. Sound like heaven? Well, "heaven" was in Columbus, Ohio this past November when the Percussive Arts Society put on their most successful convention to date.

What made this year's convention such a success? In terms of sheer numbers, this year's event holds the all-time record for PASIC attendance, as well as a significant number of exhibitors—124, to be exact. The large number of percussionists were able to peruse all sorts of percussion instruments in the exhibit area, from the largest double bass drumset to the smallest finger cymbal.

In terms of education, a varied group of artists were on hand performing clinics and master classes, seemingly around the clock. (No exaggeration: The show opened each morning at 9:00 and ran late into the evening, with the nightly jam sessions *starting* at 10:30 P.M.) Steel drums, various hand percussion, marimba, timpani, marching percussion, and many other topics were covered in clinic by recognized experts in the field. And for the drumset enthusiast, this year's roster certainly looked heavenly. Here are some highlights:



PASIC '93 capped off a very successful year for **Peter Erskine**, having released a solo effort and toured with Steely Dan. The veteran drummer treated the large audience to some fine playing, opening up with the groove to the Dan's "Babylon Sisters" and segueing into some surprisingly *heavy* playing. According to Peter, "I've found it late in life, but I've discovered the beauty of 1 and 3 on the kick and 2 and 4 on the snare."



Electronics wizard **Ed Uribe** opened the first full day of the convention with an impressive clinic. He combined his solid playing chops with his high-tech know-how, playing several real-time musical pieces at his KAT setup by triggering drum sounds as well as keyboards, bass, and horns.



The easy delivery of jazzier **Jeff Hamilton** made for a very enjoyable clinic. Jeff covered some very important drumming topics, including developing a legato sound, proper hand technique, phrasing, and playing with dynamics. His beautiful touch on his cymbals and calf-headed drums was inspiring.



The venerable **Louie Bellson** certainly reminded the audience why he has been at the top of the drumming heap for over forty years. The standing-room-only audience witnessed trademark Louie, the master soloing on his double bass kit with a technique that was the epitome of finesse. Louie also related some very interesting stories about his many years in the business.



Richie Garcia proved he is worthy of his nickname—"El Pulpo" (the octopus)—by playing several instruments at one time, sounding like a drummer *and* (a few) percussionists. Richie overcame some PA problems, and presented his concept of translating traditional Latin and Afro-Cuban patterns to the drumset.



Without question there is no drummer working today who plays harder than Kenny Aronoff. His power-drumming workouts are apparently paying off, as Kenny astounded the audience with his ability to play forcefully for long periods of time. (His double-pedal chops were *smokin'*.) After an opening solo, he played along to a number of tracks he's recorded with a variety of artists.



The sheer technical ability of Steve Smith is simply astounding to witness. Steve opened his clinic with a solo based on a hip-hop feel. He also played solos based on Max Roach's "The Drum Also Waltzes" and "Big Sid," as well as motifs such as a James Brown-inspired double bass groove and a double bass shuffle. Steve also had the audience nodding with approval when he gave a nice rap about the importance of being happy about oneself as a player.



A high point of PASIC '93 was a rare U.S. clinic appearance by Bill Bruford. Many in attendance were surprised to see Bill performing on a totally acoustic kit. But none were disappointed with his light-hearted delivery and his thoughtful approach to the drums. After discussing his concept, "Imagination, Options, and Choices" (basically imploring drummers to *think* about what they play), Bill performed along to some pre-recorded tracks of his best-loved compositions from his first band and Earthworks.



Miles Davis sideman and jazz drumming mainstay Jimmy Cobb played the last clinic of the event. Mr. Cobb performed with a quintet, and showed why he has been a "name player" for over thirty years. And don't get the idea Jimmy is past it—he layed into the drums at times almost equaling Kenny Aronoff in intensity!

As in past conventions, *Modern Drummer* was proud to co-sponsor the drumset master classes at PASIC. Our sincere thanks go to Jim Chapin, John Riley, Ed Thigpen, Peter Erskine, and Ed Soph for giving so much of themselves. The drummers who were lucky enough to observe these educators (and in some cases participate with them) in the small classroom setting came away with a truly valuable experience.

PASIC '94 will be held at the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, this November 16-19. For further information contact the Percussive Arts Society, P.O. Box 25, Lawton, OK 73502, (405) 353-1455.



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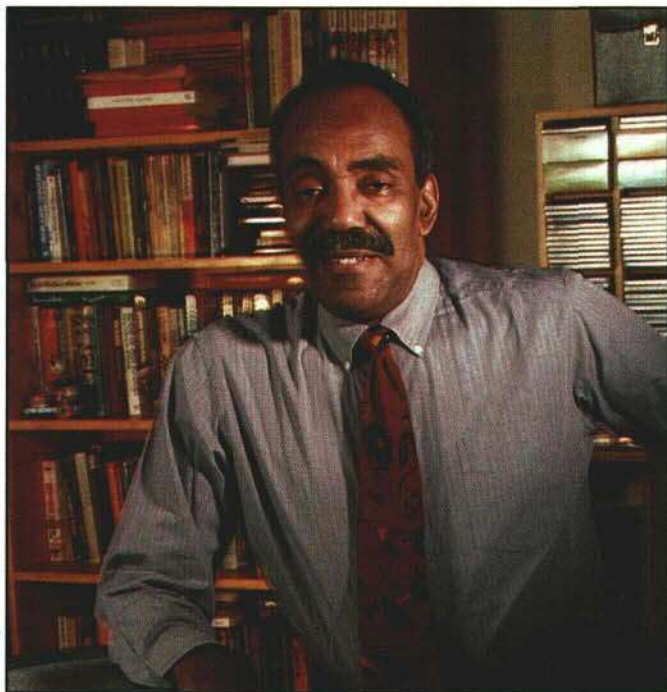


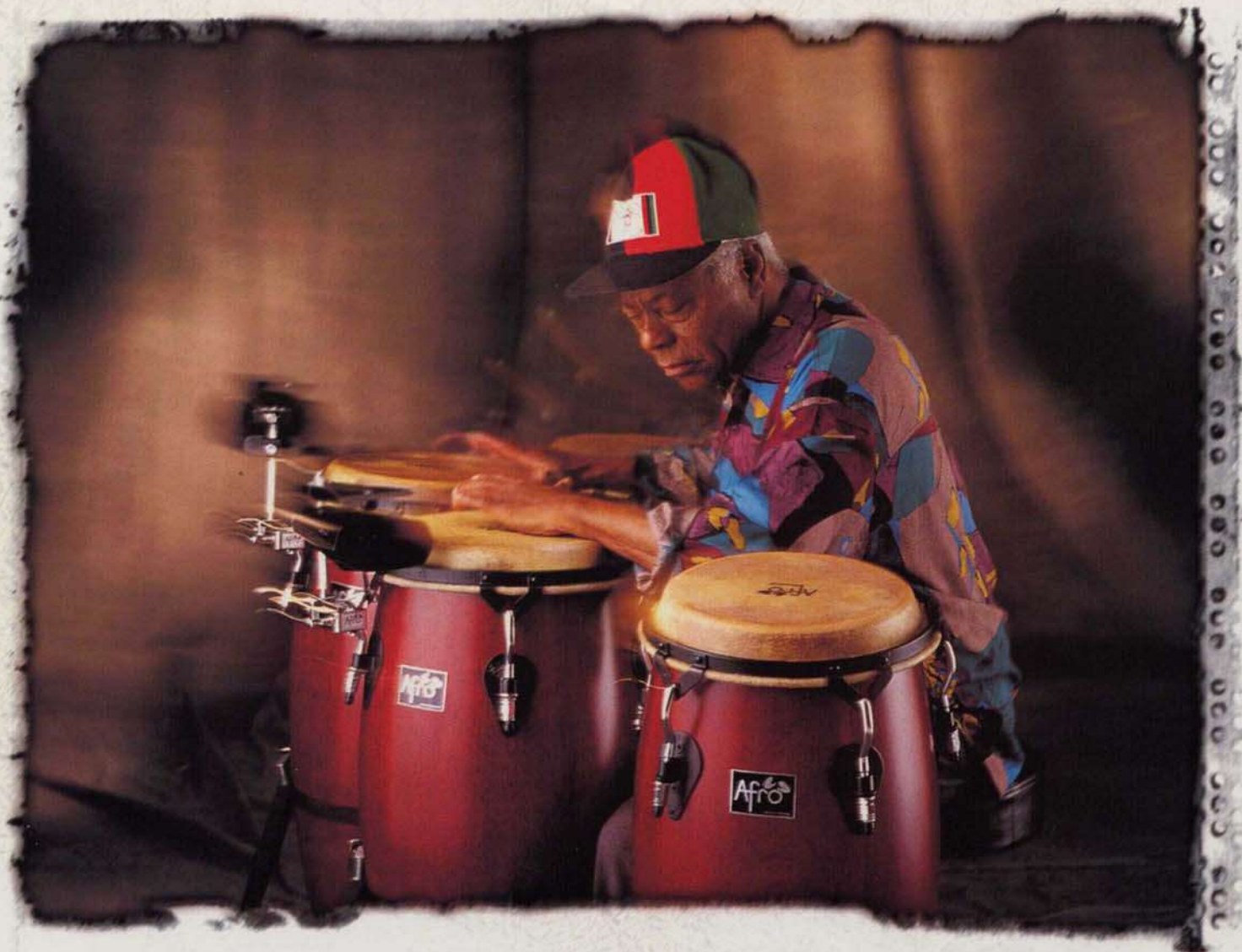
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